Week ending August 11 1956
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JOHN BULL

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by AGATHA CHRISTIE

Complete stories by
ELSPETH HUXLEY CLEDWYN HUGHES

OLD FOURLEGS: a scientist's fantastic search for the ocean's strangest prize

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Another cup please. *Time for tea and a really lovely spot for the picnic. Appetites are keen after hours in the open air. And they got some tip-top snaps to remember it by—on 'Kodak' film of course.*

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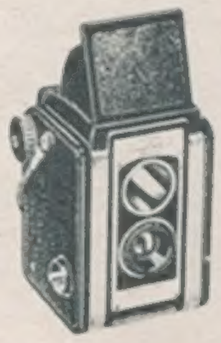

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TEMPLE BAR 2468 AUGUST 11, 1956 VOLUME 100 NUMBER 2615

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REPORT FROM THE EDITOR

Agatha Christie, an expert cook, specializes in lobster thermidor

"I NEVER take my stories from real life," says Agatha Christie, whose latest mystery thriller, *Dead Man's Folly*, begins on page 9. "But the character of Ariadne Oliver the novelist does have a strong dash of myself." The story, her seventh to be serialized in JOHN BULL, is set in Devon—the county where Miss Christie was born sixty-three years ago and spent a happy childhood "dreaming of becoming a singer or a pianist," and where she now has a house overlooking the beautiful River Dart.

An enthusiastic interior decorator, Miss Christie admits to a great ambition to build a Folly of her own, after the style of the one in her novel. She could afford to do so. Fifty-six thrillers and numerous plays and films have earned her, according to some estimates, more than £1 million.

Agatha Christie is married to Professor Max Mallowan, the archaeologist, and has accompanied him on several expeditions—one of which produced her *Murder In Mesopotamia*. She does not drink or smoke, but enjoys rich food and is an expert cook. Her omelets are described as exquisite, and another speciality is lobster thermidor—lobster grilled with butter and cheese.

She settles the plot of a new story in detail in her head, then writes it swiftly. "It is perfectly true," says an acquaintance, "that sometimes she works at her stories in a large old-fashioned bath, eating apples and depositing the cores on the wide mahogany surround."

THERE is not much that Cledwyn Hughes, author of *The Yellow Ribbon* (page 22) does not know about horses, farming and the Welsh Border country where he was born thirty-six years ago. "I got the idea for the story when a yellow-ribboned horse thundered by in a local hunt one day," he says. "And I know how attached people can get to their horses, from personal experience. I had a horse called Bess which died in 1948. I still remember her affectionately."

Hughes, a full-time writer since 1939, with five novels and more than a hundred shorter stories to his credit, lives with his wife Alyna, who was a dress designer, and his four-year-old daughter Janet, on the beautiful Merioneth coast. He writes steadily through a five-day week, and interests himself in vintage cars, music and darts—although he is a teetotaller. "This has also been known to give me an unfair advantage," he admits.

Cledwyn Hughes's heart is in the countryside. He welcomes progress, TV and mechanical aids. "But a rural existence—contact with the earth—is the happiest life possible," he declares. Then he adds: "But there is one thing I cannot stand: those self-conscious English folk dances!"

Something is needed to bring out the full flavour

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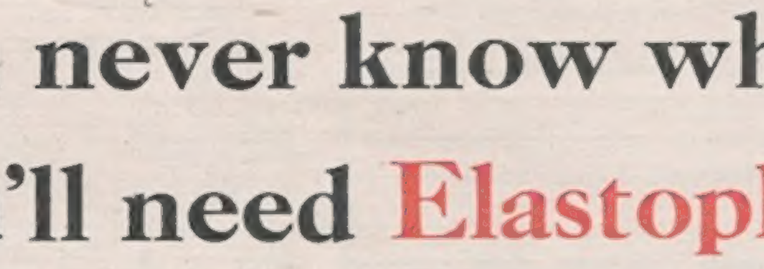

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Free Speech

- **Short-time working in our schools**
- **Danger of jazzing the classics**
- **The giddy life of a runner bean**

My children have been away from school for three weeks now, and there are four more weeks of the holiday to come. Already they have had enough; they're bored, tired and bad-tempered. I think our schools should be open in the summer holiday.

Classes are overcrowded and teachers are underpaid. The long summer holiday could be used to ease the strain on both. I know that my children would volunteer to go to "interesting" lessons.

A teacher friend of mine thinks that it is a good idea—as long as he would get extra pay. And that seems only fair. "How wonderful it would be," he says, "to have classes that *want* to come to school! I could teach them more in three weeks than they learn in the rest of the year."—Mrs. L. Colly, Liverpool.

In one American town, ninety-eight per cent of the schoolchildren join in a holiday programme run by the school authorities, and one-third of the children voluntarily attend classroom instruction. In France, where summer holidays last three months, state schools are open for voluntary attendance for two weeks in July.

Never Too Late

On holiday in France last month my wife and I went swimming every morning from a tiny beach near the village where we were staying.

We chose a spot, to the right of the breakwater, which was always secluded. For some reason all the French holidaymakers swam from a crowded beach a hundred yards away.

Walking through the village after a week of our holiday, we spotted the local handyman painting in his front garden. He was touching up a sign which read: "Danger: it is dangerous to swim on the right-hand side of the breakwater."—G. V., Wembley.

Colourful Classics

A new publishing practice is making a mockery of our literature and the education of our youngsters.

When a schoolboy I know was told to read *Lorna Doone* he thought it quite sufficient to flip through a pictorial version. And then I found that

Dostoevski's *Crime And Punishment* had also been published as a picture book.

I think that it is ridiculous and dangerous to treat adult books in this way. — Mrs. M. E. Williams, Cwmllynfell, Swansea.

No Chances

It is not fair to suggest that adoption authorities do not consider the welfare of the child ("Free Speech," July 14).

When the adoption is done through a society, its officials and the local child welfare officer are very careful to see that the child will be happy in its new home before final approval for the adoption is given. I know; I am an "adopted" parent.—R. H. C., Wallasey, Cheshire.

When a couple adopts a child, the home is visited several times by an official of the adoption society and by the local child welfare officer during the probationary period. Only if they are satisfied is final approval for an adoption given—by a juvenile court or a county court judge.

Old Friends

I have just read John Bull's story of the "Parish Behind Bars," (March 10). I knew the Rev. J. D. Broadbent when he was working in Brazil; in fact, I am godfather to one of his children. Out there, as in his prison, he would dress up as a Bedouin chief to make the Biblical stories he was telling come to life.

I shall now be able to get in touch with him again.—L. Dobson, Geita, Tanganyika, East Africa.

Right Way Up

It may be difficult to decide whether people are really right-handed (John Bull, July 7), but plants seem to be consistent in their climbing habits.

I have often tried to reverse the climbing procedure of my runner

beans, without success. They always revert to right-hand, clockwise growth.—Charles Hassell, Evesham Road, London, N.11.

Different plants grow different ways, but each type of plant is consistent. Runner beans always climb clockwise. "They seem to follow the sun," says an expert.

Alarming!

I was in one of London's busiest streets the other day when a fire engine tried to turn into it from a side road.

The traffic was fairly thick, but even though the fire engine's bell was ringing furiously, not one motorist would stop to give it the right of way. Later the same day an ambulance was treated the same way.

It amazes me that drivers can be so selfish when lives are at stake.—D. A. Kepper, London, N.W.2.

Fire engines and ambulances have no legal precedence over other traffic. "We depend on the courtesy of other road users and assistance from the police," says a fire brigade official.

Date With History

I thought that the practice of learning history by memorizing long strings of dates was a thing of the past. But a sample question for my thirteen-year-old daughter's end of term examination asked her to say what happened on thirty-seven dates: 55 B.C., A.D. 43, 410, 588, 597, 901, 950, 1066, 1108, 1120, 1137, 1164, 1170, 1176, 1188, 1197, 1215, 1240, 1265, 1284, 1295, 1314, 1346, 1348, 1356, 1376, 1381, 1399, 1400, 1407, 1415, 1429, 1450, 1461, 1471, 1483, 1485.—Mrs. M. R., Hatherley, Cardiganshire.

Readers who wish to pit their wits against the examiners will find the answers on page 6. Mainly British

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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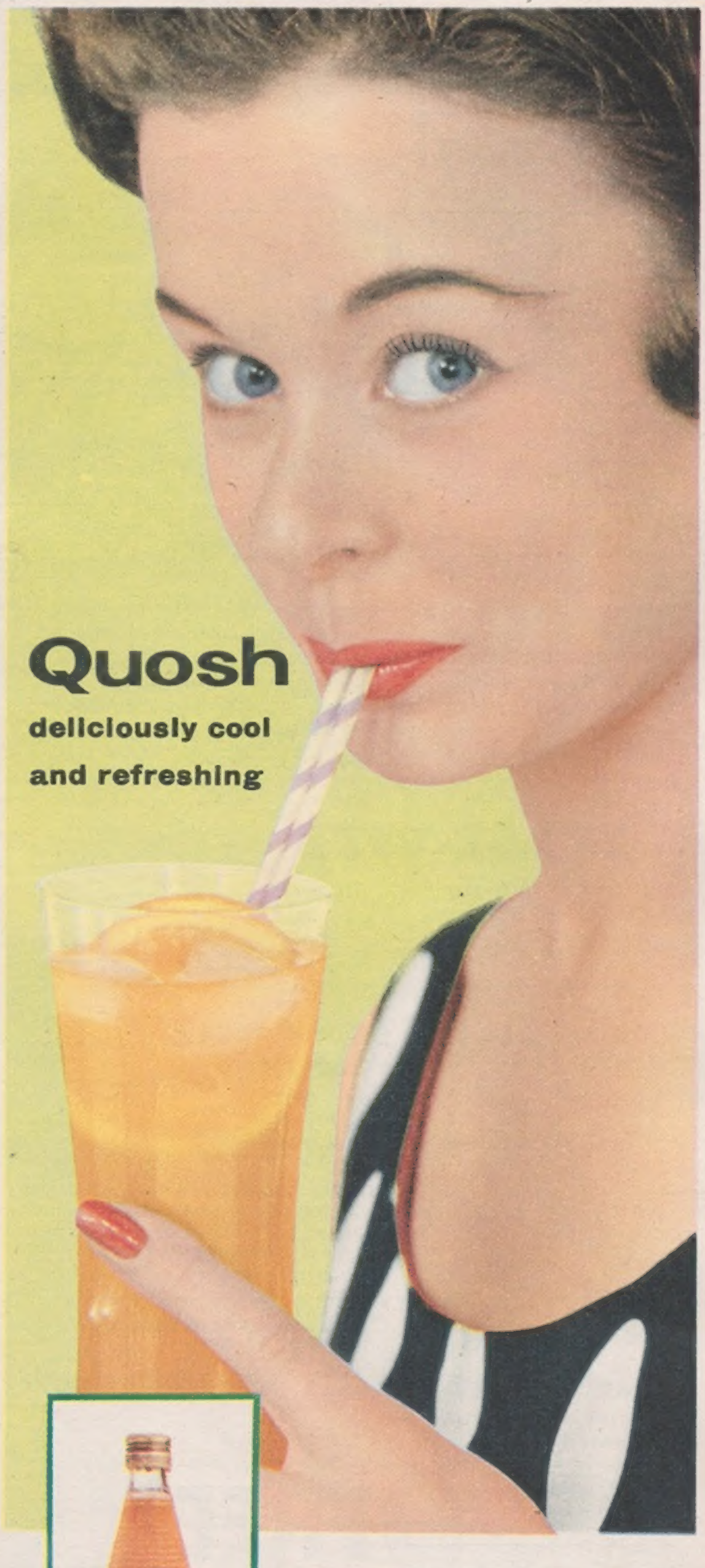

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Free Speech

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

history is concerned: 55 B.C., Julius Caesar invaded Britain; A.D. 43, Roman conquest of Britain; 410, Fall of Rome; 588, Paris destroyed by fire; 597, St. Augustine landed in Kent; 901, Danes devastated Wales; 950, Death of Howard the Good; 1066, Battle of Hastings; 1108, Owain, later Owain the Great of Wales, seized Nesta, wife of Gerald de Windsor; 1120, Henry I's son died; 1137, Owain the Great started to rule Wales; 1164, Constitutions of Clarendon limited the powers of the Church; 1170, à Becket murdered; 1176, organization of British judicial districts; 1188, Battle of Le Mans; 1197, Death of Rhys, Prince of South Wales; 1215, Magna Carta; 1240, Llywelyn of Iorwerth succeeded by his son David; 1265, Battle of Evesham; 1284, Statute of Wales; 1295, the Model Parliament; 1314, Battle of Bannockburn; 1346, Battle of Crécy; 1348, Black Death; 1356, Battle of Poictiers; 1376, Death of Black Prince; 1381, Wat Tyler's revolt; 1399, Henry IV crowned; 1400, Welsh rebellion; 1407, Parliament began to make its own reform bills; 1415, Battle of Agincourt; 1429, Joan of Arc relieved Orleans; 1450, Jack Cade's insurrection; 1461, Edward IV crowned; 1471, Henry VI murdered; 1483, Richard III crowned; 1485, Battle of Bosworth Field, Henry VII crowned.

School For Scandal

There may be a slight inequality in the standards set by examining boards for the G.C.E. examinations ("Free Speech," July 7), but there is a worse injustice than that.

In some counties it is easier to get grammar school places than in others. And many children who have qualified are denied grammar school education because there is no room for them.—W. SIMPSON, Waterloo Rise, Huddersfield.

Sir David Eccles, the Minister of Education, has told Parliament that in some areas, such as Northumberland, Gateshead and Nottingham, there are grammar school places for less than fifteen per cent of the children taking the entrance examinations.

In some parts of Wales, thirty-five per cent of the examinees find grammar school places.

Overlanders

In the Peak District I was driven off a foothpath by a convoy of noisy motor-cyclists holding trials.

I understand that local authorities have no clearly defined power to control such events. Surely ramblers and picnic parties have a right to feel safe from vehicles in some parts of the country.—W. JENKINS, Hillside Avenue, Alexandria, Dunbartonshire.

The new Road Traffic Bill includes a clause to prohibit trials on footpaths and bridleways unless they are authorized by the local authorities. The competition rules of the Auto Cycle Union already say that a meeting is void unless it is held with the permission of the local authority or the landowner.

Happy Wanderers

Seeing a party of children whisked off at high speed for a day's coach outing reminded me of the leisurely school outings before the first World War. Perhaps modern children would find them dull. I don't know. . . . We loved them.

We travelled to the Lakeland villages in horse-drawn wagonettes, sitting on long, hard benches with teachers at the ends to see that nobody fell overboard. There was no protection from the weather—summer, in those days, always seemed to be summer. Even the speed-hungry boys thought we were going quite fast enough when the horses were whipped to a trot. And we would all get out at the foot of a steep hill to lighten the load for the horses.

I remember it all, but I wonder if today's youngsters will remember their coach outings forty years on.—MRS. M. H. BACON, Frostoms Road, Workington, Cumberland.

Hot Milk

There is a danger in the attempts of youth employment officers to decide children's careers (JOHN BULL, July 14).

An officer tried to persuade a pupil of mine to give up the idea of being

a milkman ("Dead-end job," he said) to become a railway clerk.

The boy won and became a milkman. At sixteen he was earning £5 a week from his milk round and another £7 making and selling firelighters. His only complaint was that he could not get labour to expand his business.—W. J. MULGREW, Dunedin Road, Birmingham.

Safety Post

As thieves always go for bags of registered mail, it is as well to know that the Post Office issues certificates of posting which are free and ensure compensation if an unregistered parcel is lost.—B. J. SUTHERLAND, Prince Charles Road, Broadstairs, Kent.

"Quite true," says the G.P.O. "A certificate of posting, available on request, is free. The compensation is limited to £5."

John Bull pays one guinea for each letter published in "Free Speech," and at the usual rates for photographs. Readers with problems (other than medical) should write to the John Bull Free Advice Service, whose experts answer questions by post

THE COVER

ENTER two blanched novices, as white as ghosts (which, at the moment, they wish they were), and as self-conscious as marooned starfish at low tide. For months they've looked forward to donning swimsuits, but to emerge like this, white, wan and friendless. . . . It's enough to make Heseltine's cover couple hunt for an hotel with sun-ray lamps in every room. Still, a faint pink tinge will do their morale the world of good. And by the end of the week they'll be ultra-violet veterans smirking happily behind their tans at the next arrivals.

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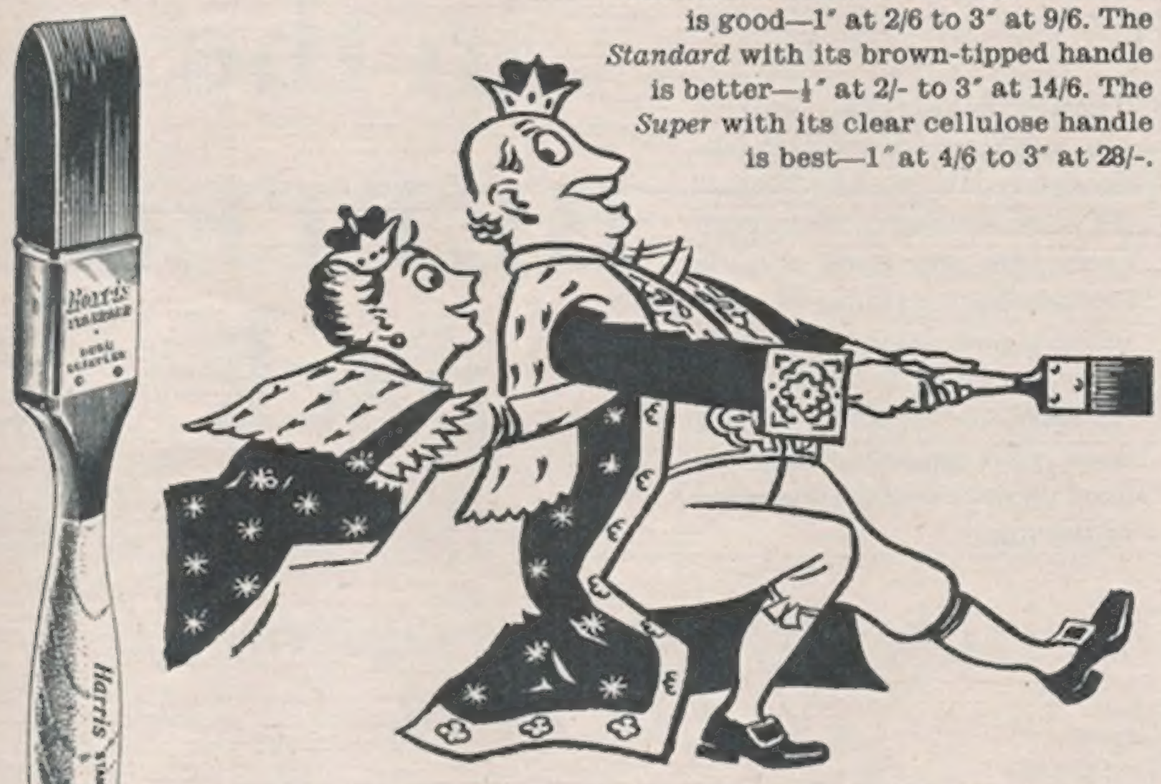

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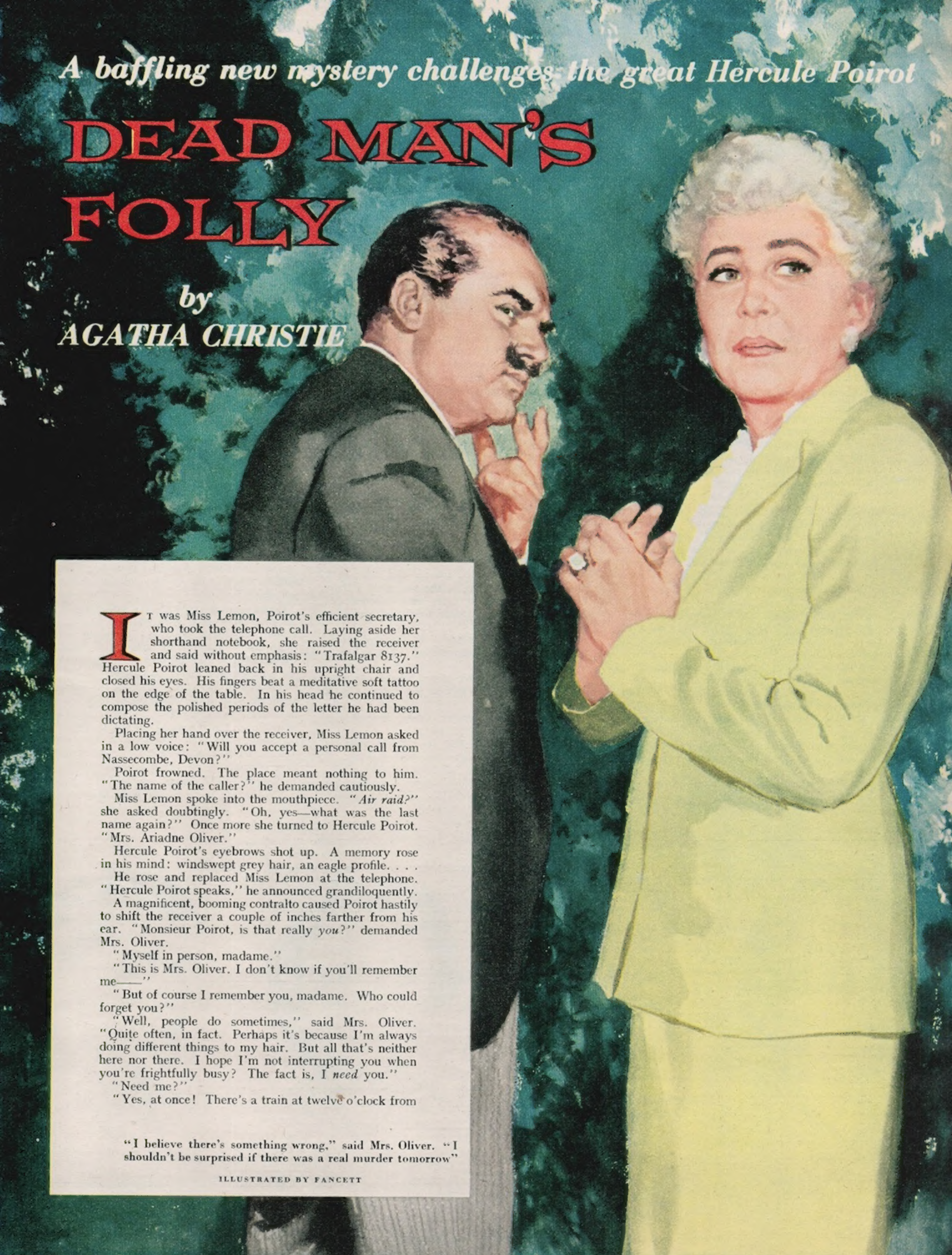
A baffling new mystery challenges the great Hercule Poirot

DEAD MAN'S FOLLY

by

AGATHA CHRISTIE



IT was Miss Lemon, Poirot's efficient secretary, who took the telephone call. Laying aside her shorthand notebook, she raised the receiver and said without emphasis: "Trafalgar 8137." Hercule Poirot leaned back in his upright chair and closed his eyes. His fingers beat a meditative soft tattoo on the edge of the table. In his head he continued to compose the polished periods of the letter he had been dictating.

Placing her hand over the receiver, Miss Lemon asked in a low voice: "Will you accept a personal call from Nassecombe, Devon?"

Poirot frowned. The place meant nothing to him. "The name of the caller?" he demanded cautiously.

Miss Lemon spoke into the mouthpiece. "*Air raid?*" she asked doubtingly. "Oh, yes—what was the last name again?" Once more she turned to Hercule Poirot. "Mrs. Ariadne Oliver."

Hercule Poirot's eyebrows shot up. A memory rose in his mind: windswept grey hair, an eagle profile. . . .

He rose and replaced Miss Lemon at the telephone. "Hercule Poirot speaks," he announced grandiloquently.

A magnificent, booming contralto caused Poirot hastily to shift the receiver a couple of inches farther from his ear. "Monsieur Poirot, is that really *you*?" demanded Mrs. Oliver.

"Myself in person, madame."

"This is Mrs. Oliver. I don't know if you'll remember me——"

"But of course I remember you, madame. Who could forget you?"

"Well, people do sometimes," said Mrs. Oliver. "Quite often, in fact. Perhaps it's because I'm always doing different things to my hair. But all that's neither here nor there. I hope I'm not interrupting you when you're frightfully busy? The fact is, I *need* you."

"Need me?"

"Yes, at once! There's a train at twelve o'clock from

"I believe there's something wrong," said Mrs. Oliver. "I shouldn't be surprised if there was a real murder tomorrow"

ILLUSTRATED BY FANCETT

It would be a wonderful garden fête, with a thrilling Murder Hunt. One of these people could be the murderer—and one could be the body . . .

Paddington to Nassecombe. You can do it nicely. You've got three-quarters of an hour——"

"But where are you, madame? What is all this about?"

"Nasse House, Nassecombe. A car or taxi will meet you at the station at Nassecombe."

"But why do you need me? What is all this about?" Poirot repeated frantically.

"Telephones are in such awkward places," said Mrs. Oliver. "This one's in the hall . . . people passing through and talking . . . I can't really hear. But I'm expecting you. Everybody will be *so* thrilled. Goodbye."

With a baffled air of bewilderment, Poirot put back the receiver.

"That was Mrs. Oliver," he said. "Ariadne Oliver, the detective novelist. You may have read——"

But he stopped, remembering that Miss Lemon only read improving books and regarded such frivolities as fictional crime with contempt. "She wants me to go down to Devonshire today, at once; in"—he glanced at the clock—"thirty-five minutes."

"Well, really!" said Miss Lemon, bristling in her employer's defence. "The things people expect! Shall I telephone through a telegram *'Regret unable leave London'*?"

Her hand went out to the telephone, but Poirot's voice arrested the gesture. "*Du tout!*" he said. "On the contrary. Be so kind as to summon a taxi immediately. . . ."

THE train drew into Nassecombe station. Only one person alighted, Hercule Poirot. He gave up his ticket and walked out through the booking hall.

A large Humber saloon car was drawn up outside, in the station approach, and a chauffeur in uniform came forward. "Mr. Hercule Poirot," he inquired respectfully.

He took Poirot's case from him and opened the door of the car. They drove away from the station over the railway bridge and turned down a country lane which wound between high hedges.

Presently the ground fell away on the right and disclosed a very beautiful river view with hills of a misty blue in the distance. The chauffeur drew into the hedge and stopped.

"The River Helm, sir," he said. "With Dartmoor in the distance."

It was clear that admiration was necessary. Poirot made the appropriate noises, murmuring "*Magnifique!*" several times.

Two girls passed the car, toiling slowly up the hill. They were carrying heavy rucksacks on their backs and wore shorts, with bright coloured scarves tied over their heads.

"There is a youth hostel next door to us, sir," explained the chauffeur. "Hoodown Park. Mr. Fletcher's place, it used to be. This Youth Hostel Association bought it and it's fairly crammed in summer time. Take in over a hundred a night, they do. They're not allowed to stay longer than three nights, then they've got to move on. Both sexes, and mostly foreigners."

Poirot nodded absently. He was reflecting, not for the first time, that, seen from the back, shorts were becoming to very few of the female sex.

"They seem heavily laden," he murmured.

"Yes, sir, and it's a long pull from the station or the bus stop. Best part of two miles to Hoodown Park." He hesitated. "If you don't object, sir, we could give them a lift?"

"By all means, by all means," said Poirot benignly.

The chauffeur started the car and came to a slow, purring halt beside the two girls. Their flushed and perspiring faces were raised hopefully. Poirot opened the door and the girls climbed in.

"It is most kind, please," said one of them, a fair girl with a foreign accent. "It is longer way than I think, yes."

The other girl, who had a sunburned and deeply flushed face with bronzed chestnut curls peeping out beneath her head-scarf, merely nodded her head several times, flashed her teeth and murmured: "*Grazie.*"

The fair girl continued to talk vivaciously. "I to England come for two week holiday. I come from Holland. I like England very much. I have been Stratford Avon, Shakespeare Theatre and Warwick Castle. Then I have been Clovelly, now I have seen Exeter Cathedral and Torquay—very nice. I come to famous beauty spot here and tomorrow I cross river, go to Plymouth where discovery of New World was made from Plymouth Hoe."

"And you, *signorina*?" Poirot turned to the other girl. But she only smiled and shook her curls.

"She does not much English speak," said the Dutch girl kindly. "We both a little French speak—so we talk in train. She is coming from near Milan and has relative in England married to gentleman who keeps shop for much groceries. She has come with friend to Exeter yesterday, but friend has eat veal ham pie not good from shop in Exeter and has to stay there sick."

AT this point the chauffeur slowed down where the road forked. The girls got out, uttered thanks in two languages and proceeded up the left-hand road. The chauffeur restarted the car and drove down the right-hand road.

They went on, down a steep hill through woods, then through big iron gates, and along a drive, winding up finally in front of a big white Georgian house looking out over the river. The chauffeur opened the door of the car as a tall, black-haired butler appeared on the steps.

"Mr. Hercule Poirot?" murmured the latter.

"Yes."

"Mrs. Oliver is expecting you, sir. You will find her down at the Battery. Allow me to show you the way."

Poirot was directed to a winding path that led through a wood with glimpses of the river below. The path descended gradually until it came out at last on an open space, round in shape, with a low, battlemented parapet. On the parapet Mrs. Oliver was sitting.

She rose to meet him. She was looking somewhat different from when Poirot had last seen her, and the reason lay, as she had already hinted over the telephone, in the fact that she had once more experimented with her coiffure. Today, her hair, richly blued, was piled upward in a multiplicity of rather artificial little curls.

"I knew you'd come," she said.

"You could not possibly have known," said

MRS. FOLLIAT

CAPTAIN WARBURTON

MISS BREWIS

ALEC LEGGE

SIR GEORGE STUBBS

HATTIE

Poirot severely. "I still ask 'myself why I am here."

"Well, I know the answer. Curiosity."

Poirot looked at her and his eyes twinkled a little. "Your famous woman's intuition," he said, "has perhaps, for once, not led you too far astray." He looked round him. "It is, indeed, a beautiful property that you have here."

"This? But it doesn't belong to *me*, Mr. Poirot. Did you think it did? Oh, no, it belongs to some people called Stubbs."

"Who are they?"

"Oh, nobody really," said Mrs. Oliver vaguely. "Just rich. No, I'm down here professionally, doing a job. I've been engaged to arrange a murder."

Poirot stared at her.

"Oh, not a real one," said Mrs. Oliver reassuringly. "There's a big fête thing on tomorrow, and as a kind of novelty there's going to be a Murder Hunt. Arranged by me. Like a Treasure Hunt, you see; only they've had those so often that they thought this would be a novelty. So they offered me a very substantial fee to come down and think it up."

"How does it work?"

"Well, there'll be a Victim, of course; and clues and suspects. All rather conventional—the Vamp and the Blackmailer and the Young Lovers and the Sinister Butler and so on. Half a crown to enter, and you get shown the first clue, and you've got to find the Victim and the Weapon and say Whodunnit and the Motive. And there are prizes."

"Remarkable!" said Hercule Poirot. "And it is to assist you in arranging this that you have sent for me?" He did not try very hard to keep an outraged resentment out of his voice.

"Oh, no!" said Mrs. Oliver. "No, I wanted you for quite another reason." She hesitated. "I dare say I'm a fool," she said, "but I think there's something wrong."

There was a moment's silence as Poirot stared at her. Then he asked sharply: "Something *wrong*? How?"

"I don't know. That's what I want you to find out. But I've felt that I was being—oh, engineered . . . jockeyed along. . . . Call me a fool if you like, but I can only say that if there was a real murder tomorrow instead of a fake one, I shouldn't be surprised."

Poirot stared at her and she looked back at him defiantly.

"Very interesting!" said Poirot.

"I suppose you think I'm a complete fool," said Mrs. Oliver defensively.

"I have never thought you a fool," said Poirot.

"And I know what you always say—or look—about intuition."

"One calls things by different names," said Poirot. "I am quite ready to believe that you have noticed something, or heard something that has definitely aroused in you anxiety. I

Continued on page 35

MRS. LEGGE

MRS. MASTERTON

MICHAEL WEYMAN

The winged invaders

They sweep across the Western Desert where armies once fought. Now Libya is the scene of a fierce new battle—against the locusts

by HARRY HOPKINS

Held by wires, locusts fly in the wind of a fan so that scientists can study development

IT was not quite 5 a.m. and still dark when the leaders of the locust-fighting parties began to grope their way into the police barracks at Garabulli to attend Police Captain Walker's usual morning briefing. It was Walker's job, as sector control officer, to collate the news of hopper movements as it came in from Arab scouts and patrolling parties, building up the fragments of information into a coherent picture to guide the day's attack. In military terms, he was the battalion intelligence officer of the Locust War.

And as the hopper bands marched and counter-marched across Libya, leaving a stripped countryside in their wake, it became sensationally clear that this was war all right, a total war of Man against Insect which—if this front was not held—might soon bring hunger and ruin to millions of people over a large area of the globe.

It had been March when the first great yellow swarms of locusts had come whirring in from the south, darkening the sky and filling the air with their mighty strumming. Flying north-eastwards across the vast empty spaces of Libya, they finally alighted. When they rose again, the sands were riddled with their eggs, neat pods of fifty or sixty bound together with a gummy substance, three hundred eggs, more or less, for each female—millions, billions of eggs.

At the end of April and in May the tiny hoppers, one-third of an inch long, broke from their eggs, crawling up the inside of the pods on to the surface and forming dark, writhing patches on the sand. But it was the month of Ramadan when Libyans, like other good Moslems, were fasting taking neither food nor drink between sunrise and sunset. At such a time one could hardly be expected to pay undue attention to still minute and immature insects in remote desert regions.

So the hoppers grew, sloughed one skin, gained a larger skin, and began to march, in long broad bands, across the desert. And behind them, as they pressed forward, more eggs were hatching, more tiny hoppers crawling out, in their hundreds of thousands, to harden in the sun. The alarm went out. Libyan forces were deployed against the invaders. But it was an unequal battle. Almost at once they were overwhelmed. Libya, it became clear, was now facing the worst locust attack for many years.

The British Army in Libya, with nearly all

A storm of advancing locusts. One swarm may cover four square miles and weigh up to two thousand tons

its transport, the R.A.F. and the U.S. Air Force were thrown into the struggle. But still the hopper bands advanced, wheeling and feinting, infiltrating into the fertile Italian farming colonies, pressing down towards the cultivated coastal belt. And as they advanced they grew larger and more voracious. An acre of hoppers can consume two hundred acres of growing crops. As the prophet Joel wrote: "The land was the Garden of Eden before them and, behind them, a desolate wilderness. . . ." The eighth plague, which had chastened the Pharaohs, was being visited upon the people of Libya also.

In the pool of light thrown by the single bulb in the police barracks at Garabulli, Paddy Walker ran a finger along the map. In this semi-desert sector not far from the coast the battle had reached a crucial stage. For days past the hopper bands had been heavily attacked on both night and morning forays, encircled by trails of gammaxene-poisoned bran.

"Zig-zag around a bit," said Captain Walker. "See if you can get an idea of how many are left after yesterday's attack. . . ."

We went out to our vehicles—two army Land-Rovers and a truck of the police Mobile Force—and started out. There were eight men (of 3rd Regiment, Royal Horse Artillery) in the army party, led by a young officer, Lieutenant Harry Cresswell, from Sherborne, Dorset. Scores of such small parties were in the field over a large part of Libya. For locust hopper bands possess a mobility and striking power hardly less than that of Rommel's panzers.

As we raced along the bottom of the winding wadi towards the morning's field of operations, a lone dog lifted its head and barked. We were passing a nomad encampment—flat-topped shelters built of loose matting, a few small squares of cultivation, surrounded by low scrub hedges to keep out the blowing sand. But it was early and no one was about yet. A couple of camels, tethered near the huts, turned their heads and gazed superciliously after us.

We ground up out of the wadi, and Driver Alwyn Pullyn, an ex-mechanic from York, took us cavorting across the desert country, expertly studying the fissured ground ahead. The convoy halted while a couple of local sheikhs gave us the latest local intelligence. We took them aboard and moved on again.

There were few live hoppers on the ground now—but plenty of corpses. But when we shook a tree, masses of fledglings rose into the air with a great milling of wings, white against the sun. Gunner Kelly, the cook of the detachment, a straw-haired Irishman from Dublin, caught one hopper in the act of sloughing off its old skin, emerging wondrously transformed, with four wings and formidable pink legs. It clung to a tree-trunk, its new wings crisping in the sun, the long horse-like head with its trap-like jaws immobile.

The whole operation is a battle against time not only on a daily, but also on a longer-term basis. From hatching, the hoppers go through six moults, enlarging greatly with each new skin, until finally—after six weeks or so—they emerge as fledglings, two-and-half inches long, and complete with wings.

In their earliest stages the hoppers are most vulnerable. If they are permitted to survive till the fifth stage, they may get away altogether. For, once on the wing, the swarms—covering on an average four square miles and weighing two thousand tons—can travel hundreds, even thousands of miles. There is no telling where they will alight. When they do, they can break down trees by their sheer weight. Their powerful jaws strip the fields clean.

But this was a war with an ever-shifting front of a thousand miles. As one thrust was repelled, another would break through. Already there was news that the hopper-bands had appeared in Misurata down the coast to the east.

Through the night the bait convoys rumbled out from the Tripoli mixing-depot to the sector H.Q.s. Four thousand bags of poisoned bran—at 10s. a bag—were being put down every day, mostly handful by handful, in the track of the advancing hoppers.

In police headquarters beside Tripoli's modernistic Uadden Hotel, the radio crackled night and day with battle reports from locust-fighting parties out all over Libya. "Stage three hoppers—heavy concentrations. . . . Stage five, fifty per cent killings. . . . remainder moving north-east. . . ."

Major Len Ellis, lately in charge of Libya's formidable mines removal programme, sits before his radios and telephones, tracing areas in blue and red upon his maps, relaying battle situation

Continued on page 32

Clustered round light bulbs in the laboratory, locusts live at an even temperature of eighty-two degrees

Details of the world-wide war on locusts are plotted on large-scale maps at the London control centre

Fathom of pearls

by F. H. YOUNG and J. A. PHILLIPS

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWARD OSMOND

This stranger had escaped when Gleeson's fortune went to the bottom. Now he was leading us to the spot. And he meant to be the only survivor—for the second time

Selkirk stood over me. He glanced

We stood into the roadstead of Broome harbour at dusk. A rain had followed us most of the afternoon, and now it dappled the grey swells around the lugger. It was not real weather, just rough enough to be irritating. When we took a wave fair on, the engine roared briefly as the stern came out of the water.

I was steering, listening to the rain batter against the tin roof of the wheelhouse, when Cobber Scott reached past me and got the bottle from the map rack. The gin sluiced down his throat, and he coughed and wiped his mouth with the back of his hand.

"You want to take her in?" I asked, because the rain squall had cut our visibility down to about twenty feet.

"Hell, no!" he growled. "You're the driver. Ram her into the pier. Split the pilot boat with her. I don't give a damn."

He had another slug out of the gin bottle and put it back in the map rack. It was odd, he was so careful corking the bottle and so careless about the fate of the lugger. And yet the Kookaburra was all that he owned in the whole world.

"Maybe you ought to change clothes," I suggested, and Cobber stared at me with his hands on his hips.

To a stranger, he would have been an extraordinary spectacle, a thick-bodied man wearing drenched shorts and an ancient Aussie campaign hat. The wide-brimmed hat no longer had its original proud curl; it hung limply over his head, like a sodden sunbonnet.

Since Cobber Scott was no stranger to me, he did not look ludicrous. The set of his chin and the dour look in his eyes were far from comic. Cobber was the best deep-water man from Hongkong to Sydney. He had dived all the pearling waters of the Pacific and had once owned a fleet of boats.

The Japs had sunk his boats at Samar during the war. Cobber had been using them there in support of a government which had not paid him a single quid in indemnity. Since that time, his luck had been bad. I was an authority on Cobber Scott's luck, because I had followed him every lousy step of the way.

"No need to get dry," he growled, and slapped at his damp hat. "I couldn't catch pneumonia if I tried."

I started to speak again, but he turned and went plunging up the stairs to the deck. As I peered ahead, feeling my way into the harbour, I could hear him bellowing, ordering the Kanaka boys around. The cold rain followed us right up to the wharf, and it was still falling after we had secured the lugger and were sitting in the deserted bar of the Continental Hotel.

The bar was pleasant and warm. The polished woodwork was starred yellow from the lights up in the high ceiling, and the rain made a racket sluicing down the tin gutters on the roof. Alf, the bartender, brought us gimlets and asked how we had done. Cobber replied that we had a hold full of worm-eaten shell, but that there wouldn't be a promising blister in the whole lot, and that if, against logic, there happened to be a few promising blisters, the native openers would be bound to foul them up peeling the pearls out.

Alf nodded and retired to the far end of the bar. He was not much interested in our tale of woe because he had heard it frequently in the last few years. We had combed the reefs above Australia, gone through the Aru islands and even into the Timor Sea, with no luck.

So Alf concentrated on his Melbourne racing sheet and ignored us. After we had sat in silence for a time, with the pound of the Kookaburra's decks working out of our outstretched legs, the bartender glanced up. "You heard about George Gleeson?" he asked, and Cobber's head turned suddenly. Gleeson was an old friend of his, another captain in the pearling trade.

"What about him?"

"His ship exploded," said the bartender. "Lost the crew and the skipper. One chap, a passenger, got out."

"Where?" asked Cobber.

"Nobody seems to know," answered Alf. "In the Torres Strait somewhere." He stared at us over the top of his racing form. "Usual blarney around town, that he had a champion lot of pearls aboard."

"They always chatter like that," growled Cobber. "Still, she was a good stout ship. He had her scraped and caulked not long ago, and overhauled her engines."

Alf didn't answer, and we went on sipping our gimlets. Cobber was frowning now; the tanned triangle of wrinkles was pushed between his eyes, as it always is when something bothers him.

Outside, people were hurrying down the walks, going home through the driving rain. The bell over the street door kept tinkling as men pushed inside the bar, and the tables around us began to fill up. Rosie, the help at the bar, was serving the tables now.

We were nearly through the gimlets when a big man came bustling in. He wore a cape glistening with raindrops, and his broad face was wet. He nodded to us, laughed and peeled off the cape.

"Bit of a willy-nilly, eh?" he asked, in high good humour, and came over to sit at our table. He was well-dressed and tanned, but overweight. Dewlaps of flesh hung from his cheeks. "You'd be Scott, wouldn't you?" he inquired, looking at Cobber.

"I might be," Cobber answered dourly. "And then again, I might be your bloody grandmother. Who asked you to sit down?"

I got loose in my chair, because Cobber has a habit of heaving furniture at presumptuous strangers.

The stout man took no offence, only roared with laughter and called for another round of drinks.

"You're a thorny man, Mr. Scott," he went

ahead nervously, but the pistol stayed pointed at Cobber. "Keep her steady," he warned

on jovially, "and you might make me back up. But I should assuredly give you some exercises."

Cobber grunted. For a second, I thought he was going to fling the remnants of his drink in the fat man's face, but he tasted it instead. His eyes were bloodshot and they watched the stranger intently.

"I'm Ronald Selkirk," announced our pleasant visitor. "If that diving equipment on the lugger belongs to you, I've got a job in mind."

"Not looking for work," Cobber said abruptly, and I flinched. We owed five weeks on the hotel bill, and we owed a packet for ship's stores.

"Very proud, aren't we?" murmured Selkirk. The drinks came and he paid for them. "But just the same, I think you'll take my charter. I was aboard the Billow Queen when she exploded off Mulgrave Island."

Cobber Scott's eyes flickered, and he reached for the fresh drink. "She was a good ship," he said.

"Aye," Selkirk was impatient. "I managed to make it to a lifeboat that was blown loose from the davits. And I was the only one aboard to leave her alive."

"This lifeboat," Cobber glanced at me. "It landed keel down, with the oars in place, I guess?"

"You can guess and be damned," said Mr. Selkirk. His joviality was all gone. "Nobody knows where she is but me."

"How much?" asked Scott.

The fat man leaned back. "Gleeson, her skipper, had peeled down seven big ones himself. He said the lot might go to thirty thousand pounds, including the little stuff."

Cobber took a frayed cigar butt from his shirt pocket and began to chew on it. "How deep does she lie?" he asked.

Selkirk took an American cigarette from a pigskin case and lighted it. "I'll give you an even split on the pearls," he said slowly. "She's down about eighteen fathoms."

"We're broke," I interrupted. "You'll have to pay us up and back. The Kookaburra carries four island boys, and they eat at intervals just like we do."

Selkirk glanced at me, rolling the cigarette across his mouth with the tip of his tongue. "All right," he said, "if we clear right away. Other people are looking for her, too, and they might stumble on to her."

I waited, knowing that Cobber didn't like Mr. Selkirk, but hoping he would take the charter. We had been poor-boying for a long time.

"Captain Gleeson was a friend of mine," said Cobber. "I don't understand how he got caught like that."

Selkirk finished his drink and stood up. "A fine seaman, Gleeson. But we're not looking for him, are we? We're looking for the pearls. Would dawn tomorrow be about right?"

Cobber champed on the cigar for a few seconds, then nodded, and the stout man went out of the street door. I didn't say anything because it didn't smell good. But I could arrange a few tricks with the chandler; there was money in it.

Cobber didn't say anything either, and after a few minutes that gusty rain began to slap at the walls of the hotel again.

A WEEK later, I leaned over the rail of the Kookaburra and watched the hoses going down into the sea. We were over the Billow Queen and both Cobber and Ronald Selkirk were below. The air compressor chugged away behind me, and the swells were disturbed in two places by streams of bubbles.

The lugger was riding steady, breasting the combers, but a dark cloud hung over the Torres Strait ahead. It was bad enough to have both men down, with the weather building. I did not relish having to haul them up and make a run for the Coral Sea.

While I watched, a pair of fins broke water suddenly and came cruising toward the ship.

They were blue fin sharks, big ones, and, as they passed abeam, they rolled smoothly, snapping at the streams of air bubbles. They went over like torpedoes, exposing their corrugated white bellies, and passed beyond our bow. I grabbed Cobber's phone and told him about the curious sharks. His voice was tinny and abrupt.

"Get on to Selkirk's line," he ordered, "and tell him to close his valve."

"Right!" I grabbed the other phone and called Selkirk. After I had explained the danger, he did not answer for a few seconds. Finally his voice came up to the surface. "I close my exhaust valve very long, and I'm dead," he said angrily. "You and your chum know where the ship is now—is that it?"

"Look, stupid!" I shouted back. "Those blue-fins can chop your lines without much trouble. If you don't believe me, walk over to Cobber Scott and see if his valve isn't closed."

The line went silent again, and I watched Selkirk's hose twitch as he moved far below the blue water. The bubbles stopped, and the two big sharks made another exploratory run and went on toward the open sea.

I called Cobber and told him what Selkirk had said.

"Yeah," he answered, "the stupid oaf damned near asked me to waltz. Maybe you ought to tell him to inflate and undo the catch on his shoes."

I considered that possibility, but decided it would not be a Christian act. If Selkirk followed my advice, he would come hurtling up, without the weight of the lead shoes, and his blood would bubble like soda water.

For another fifteen minutes, I didn't hear anything else. The twin spouts of bubbles came up again, and I checked the extra diving suit. It was always held ready in case of emergencies like a fouled line or the dreaded puff of dark fluid which meant that an octopus was taking hold. But no call came until Cobber said: "Haul up," abruptly.

I brought them up slowly, watching the compressor and the distant cloud. Cobber broke the water first, and the Kanakas hauled him

Continued on page 38

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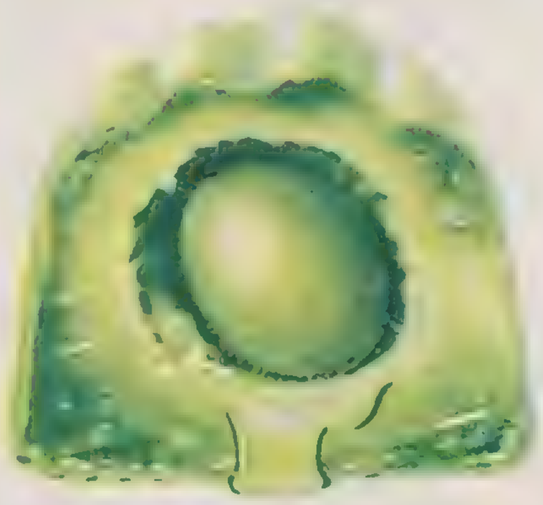

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Pertwee in a "Martian" scene. . . . He puts so much energy into his acts that frequently he hurts himself. During one show he punctured a vein

When his hydroplane hit driftwood at forty miles an hour, Jon Pertwee was catapulted into the water

Jon Pertwee, comedian in a hurry

Joking, driving a car, or just losing his temper, whatever he does is fast and violent. He even gets hurt being funny

by REX GRIZELL

THE doorman of an exclusive club in Pall Mall watched with disapproval as a tiny Corgi motor-scooter puttered to a stop outside the entrance. His stare became hostile as a young man in a pure white duffel coat, scarlet corduroy trousers and a green silk scarf uncoiled his six feet two inches from the saddle and started for the club steps.

It was not long after the war and the doorman had never seen a Corgi before. He blocked the young man's way.

"I'm afraid you can't leave that thing here, sir."

The doorman's haughty attitude roused comedian Jon Pertwee's quick temper. But Pertwee is quick-witted and unconventional as well as quick-tempered. Instead of making an angry retort, he swung round, snatched the scooter up under one arm and, leaving the doorman speechless, marched into the club and left it in the cloakroom.

When the Danny Kaye film, *Knock On Wood*, was being made, Pertwee—who once made a New Year resolution "to hit the next person who says I look like Danny Kaye"—cashed in on his resemblance to the American star by doubling for him at £250 a day.

Scenes in which Pertwee appeared were being filmed in a London street when Teddy boys started making remarks about the girls on the set, one of whom was Pertwee's future wife, actress Jeann Marsh. Pertwee warned them to stop. When they paid no attention he lost his temper and landed a stinging right-hand punch on the nose of the biggest Teddy boy, who retreated in tears.

Pertwee, now thirty-seven, is considered by many critics to be Britain's most versatile character comedian. His first successes came in 1946 in the radio show *Merry Go Round* and, later, in *Waterlogged Spa*, in which he played Commander Highprice, Robin Fly, the Bugler from Plymouth Barracks, the Postman, and Wetherby Wett. He has since successfully tackled variety, cabaret, films and television.

His zany crackerjack humour brings him £200

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Pertwee is married to actress Jeann Marsh. He is rarely seen dressed before lunch, she says

Gluckstein of the Guards

by ***ELSPETH HUXLEY***

ILLUSTRATED BY WILLIAM LITTLE

They had misjudged him once before—but this time there could be no doubt. He had fled like a coward

IN SPITE OF HIMSELF, Bill Cavendish was impressed with the manner in which this little man he'd had wished on him by the Secretariat in Nairobi had pulled Fort Hanna together and brought the district under control.

Not that he had any ill-will towards Gluckstein personally; this inoffensive, quiet little creature couldn't help his look of narrow-chested puniness, his short sight, his sallow skin, his foreign origins; it was simply that Cavendish doubted his ability to enforce discipline among these stalwart and unruly African guards, who would follow a man they respected but deride one they despised. Discipline had to be established by force of personality in these isolated posts, not merely by rules and orders.

So Cavendish, the District Commissioner, had attempted to block the newcomer's appointment to command a Home Guard fort on the forest's edge. He had tried hard not to be swayed by prejudice.

"That little German refugee as a district officer!" his wife exclaimed, in shocked tones.

"I don't care if the man's a Hottentot so long as he can do the job," Cavendish replied. "But Gluckstein—he hasn't got what it takes. It's no Sunday School picnic up at Fort Hanna."

Although law and order had been restored in the district, rebel "splinter gangs" were still raiding for food, killing cattle and chopping up any undefended fellow-countrymen they could find. The Home Guards, piratical-looking figures with slouch hats and rifles, had by no means dwindled to an ornamental status, and from time to time engaged in the ruthless kind of hand-to-hand fighting that belonged more to the Middle Ages than to the twentieth century.

Under Gluckstein's rule, Fort Hanna appeared clean and well-kept, the guards cheerful and willing. The sergeant, asked in Gluckstein's presence if he had any complaints, shook his head and replied: "All is good, bwana." He swung an arm to embrace the whole post, grinned, and added: "No terrorists get in here. If they try—" another gesture liquidated them all.

"Morale high," Cavendish noted to himself; and to his wife, who had come with him in the jeep, he commented: "Looks as if I was wrong about little Solly. He's got it all shipshape and Bristol fashion."

"Rather a Teutonic atmosphere," Morna Cavendish said critically. "If they wore boots, they'd click their heels."

"You're prejudiced," Cavendish told her, laughingly. "At any rate, he seems to have got hold of a good-looking girl."

THEY were sitting in Gluckstein's living-room, waiting for lunch. His quarters were simple in the extreme: one small room for eating and sitting, an even smaller one opening out of it for his bed. The hut was built of logs weather-proofed with clay and roofed with corrugated iron. The thin concrete floor was already cracking. Some antelope hides partially covered it, and one dry, crackling leopard-skin, badly cured, lay by the fireplace.

The photograph to which Cavendish referred stood on the desk in a large silver frame. It was a large photograph of a blonde with a mass of cascading hair, regular features, and a soulful expression. Her beauty was of the striking, vivid, theatrical kind.

"It's hard to imagine a girl like that falling for a fellow like little Solly," Cavendish remarked.

"A minor film star," his wife diagnosed. "It's been touched up a lot." She read the inscription: *Your ever-loving Lise.*

Cavendish wondered why his wife was so

"Think it over," Gluckstein said to the schoolmaster. "Chui's name means 'leopard,' but his claws are drawn"

Holding the photograph Gluckstein said to Morna: "I see you are admiring my fiancée. Very beautiful, is she not?"

hostile to Gluckstein. She ought to be able to admit herself wrong. It was she who had christened him Gluckstein of the Guards, a name that had stuck.

Gluckstein came in, at his heels a Corgi, which promptly barked. That was the worst of Corgis, they did bark.

"A tendency which might be an advantage in a guard post," Gluckstein remarked. He spoke with precision and a quiet authority, but with a slight German accent; though he had come to Kenya, Cavendish recalled, as a small boy.

His parents were, of course, refugees, and had settled in Nairobi, where the father did fairly well in a business of some kind—men's outfitting, Cavendish thought.

It was odd that the son should have volunteered for this sort of thing, which was not only dangerous but lonely, poorly paid and not even permanent. You'd have expected him to go into trade in Nairobi, or down to South Africa, where the money was.

They had an excellent lunch, competently served by Gluckstein's personal boy Joseph, who wore the long white *kanzu*, sash and fez affected by servants in towns and more sophisticated places, but not, as a rule, in a two-roomed hut miles from anywhere.

WHEN it was over, Cavendish said: "I've had a report about that blood-stained 'General' Chui. You know he's been hiding in the Naivasha area. The army's flushed him out of there and think he's moved up in this direction. He's a local man, you know."

"Yes," Gluckstein agreed. "He has a half-brother living in the district. Quite a decent fellow, a schoolmaster, who's loyal enough so far as I can hear."

"Chui will very likely make for the country he knows, where he has relatives to hide him."

"If he does, I shall hear of it."

"Blood is thicker than water in these parts. He's got a bodyguard of six or eight men."

"I am obliged for the warning, Mr. Cavendish," Gluckstein said formally. "I will take note of it, and report to you if I hear any news."

He seemed very confident. Too confident, Morna Cavendish thought. Cocky, even. His position as a District Officer had gone to his head. With his dog, his perfect servant, his formal manners, he seemed to be playing the part of the English gentleman in the bush. He even bird-watched.

And then she could sense, without anything

"Bwana," blurted Joseph, "you will not go out tonight..... It would be dangerous"

being said, a Teutonic attitude towards women. The lord-and-master complex. She looked again at the photograph, which dominated the room with its vividness and theatricality.

Women, she remembered, were for the refreshment of the tired warrior—Hitler had said that. It was hardly fair to blame a man called Gluckstein for Hitler's sayings. All the same, the blonde girl looked tiresome, a sort of ideal Teutonic woman.

Gluckstein must have seen her glance. He picked up the photograph and remarked, with a complacent expression: "I see you are admiring my fiancée. Very beautiful, is she not?"

"She is indeed," agreed Morna.

"I met her in Germany, when I went back two years ago. A wonderful visit. She is an actress. Next year, I hope that she will come out to marry me."

"She will create a sensation," Cavendish said politely.

Gluckstein beamed. "You think so? Yes, I don't believe that there will be anyone to match her. She is an artist, but also a very good cook."

"A guard post will hardly be a fitting background," Morna observed dryly.

Gluckstein gestured with his hands. "I hope that the emergency will not last for ever."

The Cavendishes left it at that, and soon afterwards departed in the jeep, along a red, twisting road that followed a ridge's crest all the way down to Tetu, two thousand feet below Fort Hanna.

Within a few days of Bill Cavendish's visit, Gluckstein knew that "General" Chui was not far away. How he knew this, he himself would have been hard put to it to say. No one came up to him and said: "Do you know that 'General' Chui is at so-and-so's?" But there were rumours, half-hints, sudden silences.

And so Gluckstein went to call on Chui's schoolmaster half-brother. His name was George Kimotho, and he lived in a neat little thatched brick homestead with a tidy front garden next to his school, together with an educated wife and three children.

A thick-set, stolid young man, George was ashamed of his connection, and looked uncomfortable when the name of Chui was pronounced.

"I know nothing of him," he protested.

"I think that he is living in the forest above my fort," Gluckstein said.

"That might be," George agreed cautiously.

"There is a reward on his head of one thousand shillings. It will be paid to anyone who gives information leading to his capture."

The schoolmaster nodded, looked even less at ease, and said nothing.

Gluckstein said: "You need a new roof on this house. One of corrugated iron."

"I cannot afford it, such roofs are expensive."

"How much—one thousand shillings?" Gluckstein asked.

George Kimotho looked at the ground and ran his hand over his face as if trying to wipe off a stain.

"Think it over," Gluckstein said. "His name means 'leopard,' but his teeth are blunted and his claws are drawn."

Gluckstein waited for three days, but nothing happened, save that rumours grew into certainties. Three women carrying food to a marriage feast were set on and robbed by several bearded forest gangsters. The men were lean, they said, as drought-struck oxen, scarred, rank as animals from their lairs. By some miracle, none of the women was killed.

The Home Guards grew excited and boastful. Here at last, after weeks of inactivity, was a chance to fire their weapons and display their prowess to the watching women.

They had grown dull in their fort, which had round it a deep moat filled with long, pointed stakes. They had been accustomed, after dark, to lower the drawbridge and hurry over it a bunch of huddled, giggling women. But Gluckstein had caught them, expelled the women and punished the whole garrison with endless drills and fatigues.

Now he inspected their quarters two or three times every night. The guards grumbled at him, but they respected him also.

NEVERTHELESS, they did not not tell him everything. They did not tell him, for instance, that Joseph, his houseboy, was in the habit of leaving the fort on mysterious errands when his master was out; nor that Joseph's wife was the half-sister of Chui. It was not their business to explain these matters, and the sergeant owed Joseph much money.

Gluckstein decided to take the initiative. But first he sat down in his box of a living-room, placed the big photograph directly in front of him, and began to write a letter. At frequent intervals, he gazed at the photograph through his thick-lensed glasses as if it were the greatest picture in the world and he, an artist, permitted to see it for a single moment and in that time stamp its lineaments so deeply on his mind that he would never forget them.

My Darling Lise: It is several weeks since the sight of your adored handwriting lifted my spirits to heaven, yet I think of you every hour of the day.

Things go hard with me here in this lonely fort, far from civilization and security. A

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Paddle like a dog, float like a seagull, and you need never drown—unless you try to be too clever. A doctor gives advice on how to keep your own and other people's . . .

Heads above water

by Dr. HARRIS PARKER

RECENTLY I was lunching with a distinguished professor of medicine, and we were talking about the risks which children take. He told me of the hot summer day when he and his brother, as schoolboys on holiday, decided on a swim. A notice in letters a foot high warned "DANGER—NO BATHING," but, being stylish swimmers, they happily ignored it. "I think," he recalled, "that we assumed it applied only to non-swimmers."

Soon they found that they were being carried out to sea, and it took a long, hard swim and all their strength to get them back to shore.

"I still don't know why I'm here to tell the tale," he said to me. "So why should I be surprised when fools throw their lives away each summer by ignoring the dangers of bathing?"

Despite the fact that more and more children are being taught to swim at school, each year there are still hundreds of deaths from drowning in Britain. Although the number has fallen in the past twenty years from 1,453 a year to 918, it could be lower still—if everyone learned to swim. And everyone can.

To almost every learner, there comes a point where it seems that his bones are made of lead and his body must sink like a plummet. That's the time to resolve not to give up.

Two facts provide encouragement, and they are more important than they sound. Dogs are never given swimming lessons—but they paddle. Anyone can do that. Seagulls rest on the water and float. The merest wave of their feet balances them on the surface. Most people can float, too.

Even those who are not swimmers in the accepted sense can practise and master these two exercises: disciplined dog-paddling and calm floating. One day they may mean the difference between life and death.

Even good swimmers are not immune from drowning. Being sure of themselves, they take risks, and ignore elementary rules. Their deaths are often needless and usually the result of one of two causes: foolhardiness or cramp.

No one would deliberately walk off a precipice or step into the suction of a quagmire. But every year thousands of people run into the sea when they have been warned that it is dangerous. All around Britain's coast there are spots where the sea is a deceptively inviting death trap. There are places where, at times, it is perfectly safe to bathe and, at other times, it is so risky that no one in his senses would take the chance. But the lure of the sea often seems to make our senses take leave of us.

Almost everyone has seen the notice "IT IS DANGEROUS TO BATHE WHEN THE RED FLAG IS FLYING," glanced up at the flag fluttering in the strong breeze—and counted people swimming happily in the sea a few yards away. But it is foolish to ignore the danger warnings.

Cramp is a different problem. A Channel swimmer may get it as easily as the man whose limit is one and a half lengths in the local swimming bath. But the Channel swimmer has a trainer's boat and boat-hook handy, while the holiday swimmer may be just out of his depth. And for him there may be no safety in his proximity to land. Hundreds of people may heedlessly go on eating their picnic sandwiches while, according to legend, the details of his life flash in front of the drowning man's eyes. This, by the way, is an old wives' tale, long since disproved by those who have been dragged unconscious from the sea and revived. The drowning man does not see his life reeled off before him. He is more likely to see black stars and red spots.

The best way to avoid all this is not to have cramp at all, and here there are two main rules.

First, don't swim until at least an hour after a meal. Eating attracts a lot of the blood supply to the stomach, leaving that much less blood, and the oxygen which the blood carries, for the muscles. If a muscle is cold and starved of blood and oxygen, it curls up into a ball and cramp is the result.

Second, don't swim when cold and chilled. The muscles are already a bit shivery in consequence, and going into the water then is asking for cramp. So, for a similar reason, is staying in the water too long when it is cold.

The swimmer who is attacked by cramp can usually save himself quite easily, so long as he doesn't lose his head and doesn't try to go on swimming. He should keep calm, roll on his back and float, then scull to safety using only his hands. Once on dry land he should pull the affected leg right up to his chest and massage the cramped muscles vigorously. Heat is what they need. If there is a vacuum flask of hot liquid—tea or anything else—available, it should be poured on a towel and wrapped round the muscle, and the massaging continued.

LASTLY, a word about saving others. Even for those who know enough about the rudiments of life-saving to be able to tow a casualty, there is still a technique in getting to grips with a struggling person. The approach should be made from the rear, and the rescuer should try to get the drowning person's head in the crook of his left arm, and then start a long side-stroke back to shore.

Once on shore, artificial respiration must be started at once. That is vital. Everything else must be ignored—and this includes all injuries or suspected injuries. The rescued person has reached a transitional stage between life and death. It is a state which is usually of short duration—often only a few minutes—and immediate action is imperative.

It would not be fair to say that fashions in artificial respiration change. But research has led to discovery of the most effective method. Doctors have acted as human guinea pigs, and courageously submitted themselves to conditions akin to drowning, to find out the best system. And the Holger Nielsen method has now taken precedence over others. It pumps air into sodden lungs at two or three times the rate of other methods. And it is so simple that it can be learned in a few minutes from a strip of pictures. THE END

The Holger Nielsen technique is the most effective for artificial respiration. Put your hands on the patient's shoulder blades and, with arms straight, gently rock forward until your arms are almost vertical. This . . .

. . . exerts pressure on the patient's chest, and so empties his lungs of water. Then start rocking backwards, still slowly, and slide your hands to his arms, grasping them just above the elbows. Still rocking back . . .

. . . raise his arms until slight tension is felt. Draw the arms gently towards you till his chest is just clear of the ground, so enabling his lungs to suck in air. Then repeat the process until breathing resumes

THE YELLOW RIBBON

by ***CLEDWYN HUGHES***

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

A great love and trust lay between farmer John and Dixie the mare. A love that defied death . . .

DIXIE the old mare was gentle in nature, yet full of courage. And because she was old and gentle and brave she was the perfect friend for her master, Thomas John. He farmed, alone, a tiny, green-acred holding where the foothills of Wales merged into the great reaches of the Shropshire Plain.

Thomas John had spent his life in ploughing and sowing and reaping; he was more interested in the soil and the reward of nature than in milk and a pedigree herd of cows. He was near to nature, and, by the shape of a cloud, and an observation of whether it was dark or white, he could tell the weather for the next day; or know when a great snow was on the way.

He loved to watch trees before a gale, as full of life and movement as a ship on the sea he had never seen. Particularly, Thomas John loved to watch the shaking stars at night; or see a moon riding across the country sky, bright as the golden sovereigns he had known as a boy.

But dearer to his heart than harvest or stars or moons was the old mare, Dixie. She was a pure-bred hunter, but there had never been a time in Thomas John's life when he could have afforded the market price for such a fine creature.

She had come into his possession years ago, when a Hunt had been passing along the winding lane in front of his little black and white farmhouse.

The last in the field had been a girl riding a lovely young hunter. The girl had been strange to horses, and as the tally-ho had suddenly sounded, she had taken her mount over a nearby thorn hedge without first making sure that there wasn't a barbed wire fence on the other side. Even as Thomas John had watched, on that January morning years ago, the young rider and the young hunter had fallen together on the far side of the thorn hedge.

Thomas John had hastened there. The young rider had rolled away, unhurt except that her long pigtails had broken loose in wild abandon. But the hunter had had long coils of evil barbed wire about her front legs.

With time, the father of the young rider was fetched, and a vet. They said that the hunter must be destroyed, that she would never canter again; muscles were lacerated, the vet had said.

Thomas John, a younger man than now, had meekly stood watching. He had seen only the expression in the eyes of the young mare, as if the animal had sensed everything which was to be. There had been no white showing of fear in the eyes, only pathos in that soft, sad gaze.

Without hesitation, the farmer had offered to buy the fallen hunter and, after a moment of hesitation, the father of the girl had accepted. With the aid of his farm men, Thomas John had moved the fallen mare to his stables, and there, with love and care, he took away the barbed wire and mended the torn flesh and broken muscles with the skill of country herbs.

One thing only had he asked the young girl about her horse before she had gone away with her father: the name of the mare she was leaving for ever. And she had answered, simply: "Dixie."

With the years Dixie and Thomas John became very attached to each other. The farmer talked to his mare when he was happy, and she was his confessor when he was sad. And she spoke to him, too, but only by such tricks as nuzzling his ear, or putting the full weight of her fine head on his shoulder on a hot summer day.

The summer was perhaps their happiest time together, for it was then that Thomas John and Dixie went about the agricultural shows. Dixie was a superb ring-jumper; Thomas John had cultivated her natural talent in that direction as soon as she had been healed from her fall.

She went over jumps with a rare grace, and together Dixie and her master were like some natural ballet.

However, Dixie was never a very fast horse, and she and Thomas John never rode in a trotting match or an open race.

Although only he knew it, the lovely Dixie had lost the sight of one eye after that fall. Both Dixie and her master accepted this handicap. It was no drawback at leaping, but in any racing Dixie would have needed that left eye for cornering. . . .

It was on a blue August day that Dixie and Thomas John stood together under the shade of an elm tree on the ground of one of the great Shropshire shows. With them was the farm lad, Dick, who had for these last two years acted as groom. The lad had a natural affinity for horses, and it was one of the sadnesses of his life that Dixie was the only horse on the farm; a solitary among the tractors.

It was one of those intense heat days of the heart of the summer. There was a shimmer on the machinery stands, the hot metal sending the air in dancing waves. Canvas shelters had been erected over the stalls of the animals, and a

brass band blared in the sun, the light bright on the golden instruments.

It was a scene such as Thomas John and Dixie had known hundreds of times in their lives. And the farmer had today, as at other times, no worry of whether they might win or lose at the open leaping. Often they had won at this show in the past, sometimes they had lost. Thomas John, an experienced horseman, came to the shows because he loved the thrill. And he knew that Dixie shared that same pleasure.

Always, on a show morning, he could sense her excitement as he watched Dick, the lad, giving her a special grooming. Then later, before they left the farm with the great trailer horsebox in tow, Thomas John would tie one simple yellow ribbon in the mane of Dixie.

It was an act of sentiment, for that ribbon had been left behind on the lane side after Dixie had fallen in the Hunt that January morning

The ribbon had broken loose from one of the pigtails of the girl who had ridden Dixie that day. Ever since, for no reason which he could adequately explain, even to himself, Thomas John had tied that yellow ribbon in the mane of his wonderful mare on competition days. So it was this day.

Dick, the dark-haired farm lad, was rubbing his sweaty hands nervously on the sides of his breeches. He was still anxious on such occasions. And he spoke his thoughts to his greying gentle master: "Wonder will we win today, Mr. John?"

The farmer had been watching the intense blue of the sky seen through the leaves of the

The mare looked at Thomas John with soft, pathetic eyes. Suddenly he knew he couldn't let them destroy her

elm tree. He stared at the greenery and the blueness a moment before he replied softly: "It is no matter whether we win or lose, Dick. It's the fun of the day we're here for."

The lad smoothed a wrinkle from the folded rug he was holding; the horse-rug which had embroidered in red across its corner: *Dixie*. Then he said: "The ground is neither too hard nor too soft, anyway. A bit of dust about, that's all."

Thomas John lowered his head and stared across the showfield, over the heads of the crowds watching the grand parade of winning animals, to the white posts and fences and rails of the leap in the centre of the ring. He answered his young groom: "If we win today, or if we lose, this may be the last summer we shall come to the shows. We're getting on, Dixie and me. Especially Dixie."

He thought of how Dixie had hesitated a little before coming out of the security of the horse-box on to the showfield that morning. She had suddenly realized how old she was perhaps? A time came when a horse was too old for winning and losing; a time when it didn't really matter who won or who lost, but only who had had the courage to try.

The brass band stopped, and the voice of the commentator came harsh and strident over the loudspeaker: "Now, ladies and gentlemen, we have the first great event of this afternoon—the open horse-leaping."

There was an exaggerated silence afterwards, and Thomas John flexed his legs in their brown riding boots and riding breeches. He tightened the silk-covered buttons of his jacket, and Dick tied the cravat for his master, and adjusted the riding cap. Even on a summer's day Thomas John believed in the great English tradition of being rightly dressed on a horse. Then Dick helped him into the saddle and reached up the crop which was never used, and the riding gloves.

Now, on one of his proudest tasks, the young groom led Dixie through the crowds and into the ring. Thomas John and his famous mare were known and loved by the country community. There was a little cheering as they entered, and the other competitors raised their hats in a courteous gesture of respect and affection.

Then the horse-leaping started, with all the competitors and their horses taking the various rails, the heights being gradually raised. Some horses failed the leap or caught the white top rail and were eliminated. But Dixie and Thomas John took the jumps easily and gracefully, after a fairly long approach run, as was their habit.

And, ever watching them, stood young Dick. Sometimes he gave Dixie a hard ball made of brown sugar and golden syrup, which had been baked in the oven of the farmhouse by Thomas John's middle-aged housekeeper. Always the lad would watch the runs of the other horses, their leaps, and then look proudly at the grace and ease of his own beloved master and horse.

After a while the suspense grew as only Dixie and two other horses were left. The rail had become high. The officials and the show's veterinary inspector were watching rather anxiously. A St. John Ambulance man had moved into the ring; there was everywhere that feeling of admiration mixed with concern when men and their horses are doing a difficult and dangerous thing.

A tall rider on a chestnut horse took the run down first. His animal refused the fence, and was given another try by the judges. This time the chestnut gamely tried the leap, but knocked the loose bar flying with a flash of white wood in the sunshine. The tall rider took his horse to the side of the competition ring.

There was left in the competition only a fine, white horse with a long mane and tail, ridden by a smiling, correctly dressed young woman, and Dixie and her master. There was a silence about the show field, broken only by the occasional calling of animals as they were being taken home now that the stock judging and the grand parade were over. Young Dick bit his fingernails in nervousness; then gave the last of the balls of brown sugar and syrup to Dixie.

The white horse and the young lady had the next turn. Before the run down she bent over and whispered into the ear of her horse. And then she was away, with a swift, wild run which seemed to be her technique.

But, in spite of a great straining endeavour, the white horse kicked the top bar with the very bottom edge of a hind hoof. The shoe splintered a piece of the rail: it broke away, the yellow, unpainted wood showing like a long scar. The young woman shook her head rather sadly.

Now it was the turn of Thomas John and Dixie. Young Dick, watching, wondered whether they would do it. Would they gain first prize and the cup, leaving the chestnut and the white mare to try another jump to decide second and third places? Or would Dixie, too, fail and the three of them have to leap again?

In a gesture of comradeship, Dick waved towards his master and the mare they both loved. Thomas John raised his crop in an acknowledgment and Dixie tossed her fine head. Thomas John smiled a little. Even the lad didn't know about that left eye which saw nothing, and that right eye which had an eagle's sight.

Waiting for the starter's signal to begin the run, the rider played with the yellow ribbon in the mane. Idly he thought of that winter's morning when he had bought an injured mare, and of all that had been between that day and this.

Then the official dropped his hand for the leap to begin, and Thomas John took Dixie down in the familiar way, with the three long-used words to her: "Up, my Dixie."

It was a most magnificent leap, and the old mare cleared the top with a foot to spare. As they went over, Thomas John raised an arm in a triumphant wave in the direction of Dick, the farm lad who was their groom and helper.

Perhaps Thomas John should not have done that, but have waited as he had always done in the past until the follow-through of the jump was wholly over. Or perhaps it was that he was ageing at a task which needed physical youth, as well as courage and gentleness and a light heart. Certain it was that what happened next was no fault of the great mare, Dixie.

Even as he saw his master waving, young Dick noticed a slight wobble in his position in the saddle. In a younger man it might have been nothing more than a shift of seat, yet now it was disaster.

As Dixie galloped to a stiff standstill on the beaten, trampled grass, Thomas John lurched from the saddle. He fell partly on to his head, yet holding on to his riding crop.

There was an "ahh" from the crowd; officials and ambulance men ran towards the neatly dressed figure lying on the grass of the great show ring which had that day witnessed his greatest triumph. But first to reach him was his mare, Dixie. She circled a moment and then stood over her fallen master, as if she was some sheepdog. She whinnied and lowered her head, nuzzling him affectionately.

Young Dick reached his fallen master a moment afterwards, with other men. Someone said to him: "Look after Dixie—we'll see to Mr. John."

Dumbly the young groom took Dixie's rein and raised her head from Mr. John. The lad felt in his pocket and found a crumb of hard, brown sugar, which he gave to the mare; she ate it with uneasy tosses of her head.

A doctor came, and after that men with a stretcher who carried the still figure through the quiet crowds to an ambulance. Then one of the judges of the jumping came up to Dick and

Dick stood waiting, anxious and silent, as the

said: "You'd better get Dixie taken back home, young man."

"But how is Mr. John?" the lad hesitated. "He isn't—dead, sir?"

The man shook his head, but his voice was serious. "No, but it was a nasty fall. Can you get Dixie taken home?"

"Mr. John used to drive, sir."

"Then I'll find a driver for you. We'll be cancelling the rest of the jumping, anyway."

The show official turned to go. There were sympathetic murmurings from the people around, and someone stroked Dixie's neck. And then Dick called quickly: "Oh, sir!"

The man turned, kindly: "What is it, my lad?"

"Sir—do you think that me and Dixie could call at the Cottage Hospital to ask how our master is?"

The man hesitated, and fingered his military moustache for a moment before he answered: "I'll tell the driver to do that, if it'll please you." He paused, and then went on: "If it'll please you and Dixie."

After a while they took Dick and Dixie to the horsebox. There Dick loaded Dixie, with reassuring whisperings. But he could see that she was uneasy, and that her eyes rolled side to side in that frightened way of an unhappy horse.

A stranger was at the wheel, silent and intent on the gears of the vehicle. They were driven through the flag-bedecked streets of the county town, gay with people in summer clothes. In

doctor spoke to the nursing sister. "Fetch Matron will you, please," he heard the doctor say

the main market place there was some Morris dancing. Dick hated its gaiety on this day when their master had fallen.

They went up the short lane between poplar trees and privet hedges to the local hospital. Once, quite long ago, Dick had been there while a schoolboy to have his tonsils out. He remembered, even now, the sweet, sickly, medicated chocolate they had given him to eat when it had all been over.

"Here you are, mate," said the driver.

YOUNG Dick got out, and rang the bell at the white front door of the little Cottage Hospital. After a while a nursing sister came to the entrance; she looked down at him and said with a laugh: "Showground's over there, Tommy."

Dick answered with what he hoped was the gravity of a grown man: "My name's Dick. I've come to see my master, Mr. John."

The sister's face became serious and she suddenly looked over her shoulder as a tall, slightly stooping man appeared there on his way out. He must have heard the last word, for he spoke now: "You want to see Mr. John, laddie?"

"Yes sir, please. Or if I can't see him I want to know if he will be well."

The tall, slightly stooping man said: "Sister, fetch Matron, will you, please?"

"Yes, Doctor."

She went away with a patter of her black shoes over the bright red tiles of the hallway. The doctor said: "Come in, laddie. I've been called from the town to see to your Mr. John. Are you his son?"

"Oh, no, sir. I'm Dick—Dixie's groom."

"Oh, Dixie? I've heard of Dixie all right. I used to have a daughter who jumped at the shows. She used to curse your Dixie very often." The doctor paused, and bent his head to look through the glass panels of the front door to the trailer horsebox standing in the August sunshine. "Is Dixie in there?"

"Yes, sir."

"Ah, good! But here's Matron." A plump, friendly looking woman arrived and the doctor said: "Matron, this is Dick who works for poor Mr. John."

Matron nodded. "Poor Mr. John."

The doctor turned to Dick. He said slowly: "Your master is quite ill, but his spirit is worse than his body, really. He is very worried about his Dixie. He's been talking about her ever since he regained consciousness."

Matron nodded agreement, and the doctor went on: "So, to reassure him, I'm going to apply some crazy countryside medicine. If he was in a city we'd give him a quarter grain of morphia and send him to sleep. But seeing that he is ill in the country I'm going to show him his horse again and make him well."

The Matron looked rather anxious at that, and spoke stiffly: "But I can't have a horse *inside* my hospital, Doctor."

"Don't worry, my dear Matron," answered the doctor. "We'll just open a window, that's all. Now, Dick, unload Dixie, will you? And when you see my head through one of those windows facing the shrubberies, bring the old charger around there."

In some wonder Dick went outside and lowered the doors of the trailer. "Come on, Dixie, boss wants to see you," he said.

He backed out the old hunter and took her over the gravel and through the laurels and the rhododendron bushes to where the head and shoulders of the doctor were thrust through a window. "Here," said the doctor, "bring her here, never mind the lawn. This is a hospital first, and a landscape garden second."

The doctor moved back from the window and, looking through, Dick could see a small room, with one bed in it. There lay his master, Mr. John. He looked whiter than usual, and they had brushed his hair but given him a parting on the wrong side.

The doctor stood aside, and there was a nurse by the head of the bed. For a moment Thomas John and Dick looked at each other, and then Dick said: "Hallo, boss! Nasty fall you had."

Thomas John answered softly: "It was not the fault of our Dixie. Tell them all, won't you? It was my fault."

"They know, I expect, Mr. John. They were all watching."

The horseman tried to lever himself up in the bed, but the nurse soothed him back. He spoke quite strongly: "Dick, what has become of Dixie? Don't let the vets get at her. She has years of gentle life in her, yet."

THE doctor beckoned to Dick vigorously and the lad stepped back and led the old mare up to the hospital window. And she, as if she had heard the voice of her beloved master, put her head through the aperture.

Dixie's master, who had had a nasty fall, laughed then, softly but surely. "Dixie," he said, "you old scamp, Dixie! I was afraid you might have been hurt, too."

The doctor said: "Well, Mr. John, now that you know that your mare is all right, you can rest easy, can't you? I'm a countryman myself, and I know just how you feel. Now get some rest to wear off that concussion of yours. Rest and quietness, and in a week you'll be home again to Dixie."

The man on the bed murmured: "Home again to Dixie! And we'll stay home always now. No more riding to shows. We'll just watch the clouds and the skies, the stars and the moons. But one thing before Dixie goes away, let me have the yellow ribbon."

The doctor looked puzzled, but Dick understood. He untied the yellow ribbon from Dixie's mane; the ribbon which had once, long ago, been worn in the pigtail of a young girl rider, and which, on each day of the leaping, had been worn by Dixie. Dick untied it and handed it across to the nurse; she tied it about the wrist of Thomas John.

The doctor said: "And I'll explain to Matron, just in case she takes it away. Now Dixie and everybody else, off with you."

Dick led the old mare to the horsebox, and the nurse closed the hospital window. And as he loaded Dixie ready for the journey to the farm, Dick said softly to the stranger who was at the wheel of the vehicle: "Day's getting light again, and the sun stronger."

The driver looked at the lad curiously, and then answered: "He'll be all right. Seeing Dixie will be better than all the medicine they can give him."

Dick nodded, and closed the trailer doors upon Dixie. He could hear cheering from the showground on the far side of the town, and he wondered if Mr. John was listening, too.

Old Dixie, long used to cheers, gave a slight neigh. Dick knew that she understood all about winning and losing; perhaps she understood, also, how her master had won a round against the ultimate riding master. THE END

OLD FOURLEGS (2) • by J. L. B. Smith

I fly five thousand miles for a fish

The air force men were sure I was mad—and who could blame them? I had persuaded a prime minister to lend me a plane for the strangest mission of all

EXCITEDLY, I took the telephone from Shearer's hands. "Dr. Malan himself," whispered my host. I croaked into the receiver, but it was a woman's voice that answered me, in Afrikaans: "Mrs. Malan, here, Professor. The doctor wants to speak to you."

There was a click, a fumble, and then I heard a slow voice speaking in English: "Good evening, Professor. I have heard something of your story, but will you please give me as full a summary as possible?"

So I began, late on Boxing Night, 1952, to tell my fantastic story to the Prime Minister of South Africa, and to explain in Afrikaans why I wanted an aeroplane to fly me into the tropics to collect a dead fish.

I told him about the capture of the first coelacanth, off East London in 1938, and of the sensation that the fish, believed to have been extinct for seventy million years, had caused among scientists. I explained that the insides had been lost, and described my years of searching for another fish. Now, I believed that a coelacanth had been caught in the Comores, where the heat was stifling and there was no refrigeration.

Again I emphasized that I could not be sure that this was a coelacanth, but I was more than satisfied that it might be the greatest scientific tragedy not to make certain of it.

Dr. Malan listened all the time and did not interrupt or ask questions; he was obviously soaking it all in. He was so quiet that at intervals, fearing the line had been cut, I would ask: "Are you there?" and he would say: "Yes, go on."

When I had finished I saw to my amazement that I had been talking a full twelve minutes. There was a short silence, and his first words were: "I must congratulate you on your Afrikaans. It is excellent."

That was high praise indeed, but what about the coelacanth? Was this just an unexpected prime minister's sugar-coating?

I waited in agony, maybe there would be questions, but none came; and after a short silence he said, speaking slowly: "Your story is remarkable, and I can see at once that this is a matter of great importance. It is too late to try to do anything tonight, but first thing in the morning I shall get through to my Minister of Defence to ask him to allocate a suitable aeroplane."

He promised that I would be telephoned in the morning. I thanked him and we said goodnight.

As I put down the receiver I felt dazed, like a man reprieved on the very scaffold, like somebody suddenly jerked from the hollows of hell to a high hill-top in heaven.

At Durban, Smith was greeted by a surging crowd, a battery of cameras and urgent requests for a broadcast

It was only much later that I heard the outlines of what had happened in the Malan household that night. When Dr. Shearer, a Member of Parliament with whom my wife and I were spending the evening, had telephoned, Dr. Malan was in bed and as far as was known asleep. Mrs. Malan answered. She listened to Shearer, but judged that the matter should wait at least till the morning; but as she put down the receiver Dr. Malan called out to ask what it was, and would not be put off.

She gave him a brief outline of the matter. Dr. Malan nodded his head thoughtfully. "This man Smith is well known. Bring me that fish book."

Mrs. Malan took him a copy of a book I had written on South African fishes.

Dr. Malan found the pages on the coelacanth, and read them slowly. He shut the book, called his wife and said: "The man who wrote this book would not ask my help at a time like this unless it was desperately important. I must speak to him."

Mildly his wife tried to dissuade him, but he repeated: "I must speak to him now." And so the telephones were set going. . . .

My wife and I had arrived at Durban in the liner Dunnottar Castle en route for Port Elizabeth after an expedition to Kenya to collect specimens of rare fish. From Dr. Shearer's house we returned to the ship in which we were due to sail early next morning.

What lay ahead required the most careful planning, every step; there must be no false moves. Hunt had this creature on Pamanzi, an island in the Comores, hundreds of miles west of Madagascar. I could only guess what I should find there and despite the promised plane the problem still was how to reach the spot where the fish was, and quickly.

I might have to make a voyage by sea from the nearest landing-ground. To cover that possibility I had to work out all my needs—clothing, food, money, preservatives, medicines; there must be no slip up with any item. I was hard at work right through that night, and when my wife turned over in the dawn to look hazily across at me, I was pretty tired, but could smile, for my plans were complete.

At 7 a.m. I sent a message to Captain Smythe to ask for the latest departure time and to say that I should be leaving the ship. Soon after 8 a.m. I was back at Dr. Shearer's house waiting for the call that would tell me a flight to the Comores had been arranged. When would the message come?

A call from my wife—any news yet? Sailing had been put off until eleven thirty, but could not be delayed a moment longer. I left at once for the docks, where the Dunnottar was ready to move. I raced aboard, did a quick check through our baggage. A quick goodbye on the quay and my wife went up again, almost yanked aboard by an officer as the gap opened. Photographed indelibly on my brain is a tiny figure, waving: my wife on the bridge as the liner gathered way out through the harbour mouth.

The morning passed, with still no news of my plane. I tried to rest, but could not. I was in a fever. Something had obviously gone wrong. Later I heard that storms had cut the telephone wires and a message had to be taken to the Defence Minister by road. It was typical of everything in this affair, the constant hold-ups.

At 3.30 p.m. I received a message that it had been decided to use a Dakota from Swartkops, Pretoria, which would arrive at Durban at six next morning. It was a terrific relief to hear this

Smith unpacks the coelacanth at Pamanzi. With him, left to right, are Hunt, Ralston, Letley, Bergh, Blaauw, Brink and the Governor of the Comores

definite news, and I arranged to be fetched by an army car at 5 a.m. Friends were told of these arrangements and I sent a telegram to my wife on the ship:

PROBABLY LEAVING DAWN

It was only then that I cabled Hunt.

HOLD EVERYTHING GOVERNMENT SENDING PLANE

Within a short time I was being subjected to an intensive bombardment by telephone, from near and far. Would I confirm that the Prime Minister had granted a military plane? When did we expect to leave?

Then a new phase started. Would I take a press representative? I said that would have to be considered, and then there came a succession of requests from cinema, newsreels, television, and other agents, until I began to wonder if there was going to be any room on the plane for me. Eventually the authorities ordered that only I was to go.

Near midnight I went to bed and actually slept a few hours. Despite my extreme weariness I needed no alarm clock; indeed, I never do need one, for I can wake at any desired moment. But I beat myself that morning, and woke at 3 a.m. and was in the car at five.

It was misty at the aerodrome, and we heard the plane circling long before she came into view. When the door opened, three huge air force officers emerged and came over towards us. The local commander called out: "Captain Blaauw, let me introduce you to Professor Smith," and a powerfully built man of about thirty, in whose strong face shone piercing eyes, came up with hand outstretched.

To his conventional greeting I answered: "I bet when you joined the South African Air Force you never expected to command a plane sent to fetch a dead fish."

His face opened a bit at that, and his brief reply left no doubt that he felt that way. He was clearly a powerful personality, and I soon learnt from the others that he was an ace pilot from Korea, one of our best.

They asked if I was ready. I said I was, but asked what food they had. They said iron rations, standard on the plane, nothing else; they were confident that those would be all that were necessary. I smiled inwardly, though with what I had brought, plus those iron rations, I felt there would be enough for emergencies.

Then I asked how much water was aboard, and was told about three gallons. Why? I asked if they knew tropical East Africa, and without waiting for any answer said that if we had an accident I certainly did not want to fight six men bigger than myself for water.

I refused to leave without more water, and as this flight was for my needs, they sent a car racing away across the airfield to collect some.

We took off at 7.10 am. It was my first experience of a military aircraft. The hull was unlined and she certainly was noisy and not exactly luxurious. As soon as we had settled on an even keel I went forward and was introduced to the six-man crew.

I asked the course, and was told that we should sleep at Lumbo, in Mozambique, that night, and go on to Diego Suarez on north Madagascar as early as possible next day. After that? They had been unable to find out if there was any hope of landing at the Comores. The South African forces had made an air strip on Pamanzi during the war, but it was not known if the French had kept this going or whether a plane like this could land there at all.

So even the immediate future was still dark and uncertain, just to add to the black cloud of uncertainty and dread that it might not be a coelacanth after all. This terrible agony, my life blood, all this fuss and bother—just imagine if it proved to be a common fish. How the world would laugh, and even Dr. Malan would catch it from his opponents.

Lourenço Marques ahead. Captain Letley, the second-in-command, grimaced and gestured to a safety-belt. We were landing. I returned to the hold and sat down.

As the doors opened I shot out—it was hot all

Smith and his wife took the fish to show to Dr. Malan (left). On seeing it he said : "Do you mean to say we once looked like that?"

At Ysterplaats airfield, the coelacanth is loaded into a plane. Everywhere, Smith kept watch. Once he slept with it at his bedside

right, just think of the Comores! A minor airport official ran out and embraced me effusively, and there were greetings from other officials, all old acquaintances, and some friends.

I had taken care to bring plenty of Mozambique currency, and soon had the crew filling up on hot coffee, soft drinks and food.

Soon we were off again, north, over the land, on a beeline for Bazaruto. At the level of Beira I opened my packages and gave each man a small feed consisting of litchis, biscuits, dried figs, and cheese. Eating together loosens reserve, and there was now less tension and even occasional smiles from the crew.

I asked Blaauw if I might light my small Primus to make coffee for everyone, but he was plainly shocked to the core. It was against all regulations. I told him I had often lit that very same stove in a hold full of T.N.T. without danger. After all, man, I pointed out, after all I had been through I wanted to get that coelacanth. But he would have none of it even when I pointed to matches and lighted cigarettes.

I told Blaauw and Letley that it might prove not to be a coelacanth at all—I had gone on Hunt's briefest words. This shook them, and they whistled in astonishment and some alarm. They told me that the plane cost about £40 per hour in flight, so even if it were a coelacanth I calculated it was going to cost at least £20 per pound landed in South Africa, if it ever was. A costly fish indeed, in more ways than one.

I was far from happy about going to Madagascar without first trying for a nearer goal. For a South African military plane to land at Diego Suarez on this particular errand might well irritate the scarcely healed wound caused by the forcible seizure of Madagascar during the war, in which South Africa had played so great a part.

It would be better, I felt, to fly over the Comores, at least to see Mayotte, and if there was no information, we might look at that airstrip ourselves. Could we not judge its possibilities by flying low down? Screwed-up faces without words were not encouraging, but I was convinced that this would be the soundest policy and said so, firmly. We landed at Lumbo at 3.30 p.m. As I came out, phew, a blast from an oven wasn't in it. I thought again of the Comores and the fish lying there.

We had dinner in the evening, and I asked Blaauw for a take-off at 4 a.m. There was a general groan, and after a bit of a skirmish we fixed for 4.30, coffee at 3.30 a.m., the cars at 3.45 a.m. Some of them grinned. Would the Portuguese make it? I offered to bet them it would all be on time.

We took off at four thirty to the second.

It was an impressive dawn whose breathtaking beauty only served to emphasize the threat that lay behind its tumbled masses of red-tinted clouds. This was the cyclone season in one of the worst zones in the world, and if one caught us out over that sea, coelacanths or anything else would not matter any more.

As we took off we plunged straight at tier upon tier of gigantic columns that reached up into misty heights, giving the impression that we were approaching an enormous and fantastic tinted marble temple of ever-changing aspect and form. The clouds looked so solid that I found myself tensing up each time we plunged into a whirling face, half expecting the plane to be crushed flat. We climbed steadily and

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

I brave danger three miles high

Leonard Moules tells the amazing story of his adventures in the wild, mountainous country of the Himalayas. As an explorer and missionary, he is doctor, surgeon and dentist to the colourful tribes who live on the Indian-Tibetan border

COMING SOON IN JOHN BULL

Expedition South

Major W. E. Anderson's dramatic account of the British expedition which he led into the unexplored Antarctic

Fruit flan tastes wonderful with double rich Carnation

Whipped Carnation adds such a special creamy flavour. And it's so quick and easy to whip — economical too! Here's how to do it:— Whisk well-cooled small can of Carnation Milk until double in bulk. Add tablespoon lemon juice and whisk until thick. Then add heaped tablespoon caster sugar and vanilla essence to taste, finally whipping until texture is smooth.

Carnation Macaroni Cheese. Here is an easy-to-make, delicious recipe. Carnation is the secret of its special creamy flavour. *6 ozs. macaroni; 8 ozs. grated cheese; salt; pepper; 1 large tin Carnation Milk.* Cook macaroni in boiling salted water. Drain. Heat Carnation Milk gently. Remove from heat, season, and add most of cheese. Mix well. Pour over macaroni in greased pie dish. Stir. Garnish with remaining cheese, and tomato if desired. Brown under grill. (Serves 4.)

There is no substitute for **Carnation Milk**
"from contented cows"

I had repeatedly to clear my ears, but could not take my eyes from the wonderful scene that lay before and about us. Never had I seen such spectacular cloud effects, their size and grandeur were almost beyond description.

A tap on my shoulder made me jump, and there was Ralston holding a type of bulging greyish overall. "It's going to be very cold up here, sir; you'd better get into this Mae West." I looked dubiously at the thick-padded overall suit. "You float in this," he added with a grin. That made me think at once of tiger sharks; floating in that sea wasn't much use, it just prolonged the end. Twenty minutes on the average was all you had with those brutes about, but Ralston knew nothing about it. I hoped he would not need to learn.

Our course was straight for Mayotte. It had been agreed that we should keep trying to get Dzaoudzi, in the Comores, by radio to know if we could land, but so far there had been no response.

I went to the hold and got out my supplies. First I took each man a kind of fruit salad of my Lumbo-foraged pineapple, pawpaw and banana, sprinkled with sugar and dried milk. They looked at this with astonishment, and Blaauw at least cocked a speculative eye at me, but nobody asked any questions. Then I gave them a round of biscuits and cheese, and in a loud voice so that all, especially Blaauw, could hear, pictured the delights that coffee would have added. Blaauw sat like a rock without moving a muscle; Letley flashed me a quick impish grin.

All this time my brain was buzzing like a machine round the main themes of whether we should be able to land and was it a coelacanth? As the time drew nearer, I became more and more tortured by doubts and fears. Had I not been an incredible fool to trust a layman's opinion? Hunt had the pictures and all the information we could give him, but those not expert can easily be mistaken. The situation was typical of most of my life, either hell or heaven, seldom anywhere between.

Suddenly Letley pointed ahead. "Mayotte," he said, and my heart turned right over. So it was there, somewhere there that this fish lay, this fish in whose identity much of my life might be buried. Suddenly the blurred mass turned into a cloud-topped island. Surely, now we were so near, we should get a reply to our constant battery of signals; but still nothing came.

We were diving down at a steep angle when the clouds parted and drifted aside, giving a clear picture of steep rolling hills and conical peaks whose densely tree-clad slopes rose almost abruptly from the sea. Could we ever land here?

We passed at about three thousand feet over the extensive barrier reef that lies west of Mayotte. It was a marvellous sight, a multi-coloured riot of blues and greens, which for some moments diverted my thoughts. What a place for a fish, a maze of channels and water of all depths, with clearly abundant coral! Even at that height it was possible to see plainly many shoals of fish of all sizes.

I was already planning to make a fishing trip here when my thoughts were shattered by a shout from Lieutenant Bergh, who said "O.K.," and jerked his hand, first thumb up and then down.

I suddenly felt weak and shaky. We were actually going to land. We saw Pamanzi, the houses of Dzaoudzi and a small lake, and had a passing glimpse of a tiny toy vessel close to the wharf that something told me was Hunt's. My heart was pounding madly, and they had almost to force me to sit down and tie myself in. I had seen the airstrip. It certainly was small and looked rough, a rounded bit of the island sticking out to the south; obviously not long ago it had been a coral reef under the sea. We had to land from the sea and in front was a high hill.

Bump, bump, bump! It was a wonderful landing on that rough surface, but the instant we came to a stop the heavens opened and the rain poured down in torrents.

It stopped abruptly, as if turned off by a tap, the mist parted and figures came running across the flattened coral. The door opened and through a blast of hot air I saw Hunt's face looking up at me. For a moment I just could not speak; then with a rush of pent-up emotion the words "Where's the fish?" burst from my lips like an explosion.

With extraordinary intuition Hunt replied: "Don't worry, it's a coelacanth all right." This had a strangely soothing effect on me, but I was still in a fever. Various French officials were introduced to me; but I saw hardly anything. I wanted to see that fish.

"It is on my boat," said Hunt, and that at least was a terrific relief, for it meant that even in French waters, on Hunt's boat it was not strictly in French territory and technically it would be less like taking it from the French. I had received a cable from Hunt that the French were trying to claim the coelacanth. I felt that this was my coelacanth (if it was one) by every right, and in my almost insane obsession I knew that those six South Africans would be prepared to stand by me if necessary.

We moved over to the small house

on the edge of the field. "Where is your boat?" I asked Hunt.

"At the quay," he said, "but we shall have to go first to the Governor's house, as he is waiting to meet you. We'll just have to do that," he added. "For my sake, at least."

I have often suffered from the necessity of paying tribute to officialdom, but this was probably the hardest I have ever endured. It was agony and torture, and I raged inwardly, my mind a searing flame. I wanted only one thing, that was to see that fish, to know if I was a fool or a prophet. But civilization won. At a tall, two-storied wooden residence, I was formally introduced to the Governor and his lady, and through one of his suite who spoke English I presented our crew.

Our attention was drawn to a big table that I now saw was laden with bottles and dainties of all kinds. I could endure no more, and explained that I would prefer to enjoy this bounteous hospitality later. We all went, the Governor as well.

It was only a moment in the car and there below the concrete wall was Hunt's schooner. Hunt pointed to a large coffin-like box near the mast, and I knew that it must be in there. They picked up the box and put it on the hatch-cover, just in front of me, a foot above the deck, and Hunt pulled away the lid. I saw a sea of cotton-wool; the fish was covered by it.

My whole life welled up in a terrible flood of fear and agony, and I could not speak or move. They all stood staring at me, but I could not bring myself to touch it; and, after standing as if stricken, motioned to them to open it, when Hunt and a sailor jumped as if electrified and peeled that enveloping white shroud.

Yes! It was true! I saw first the unmistakable tubercles on the large scales, then the bones of the head, the spiny fins. It was true. It was a coelacanth all right. I knelt down to get a closer view, and as I caressed that fish I found tears splashing on my hands and I realized that I was weeping and was quite without shame. Fourteen of the best years of my life had gone in this search and it was true; it was really true. It had come at last.

Suddenly my mind cleared. Time was passing. Blaauw had told me that we must leave as soon as possible, for in his opinion if the weather shut down we might not be able to get away at all.

I spent about five minutes in rapid inspection of the fish, and took some photographs. My excitement was naturally intense, and the sudden release of fear and strain was almost more than the human system could endure.

I was surprised to find no first dorsal fin and no extra little tail such as all coelacanths have had; but it was definitely a coelacanth. It was probably a different genus from my East London fish, but still a coelacanth. I must name it quickly. Malan, yes, certainly, first Malan. Genus *Malania* sounded good. *Malania hunti* seemed to be clearly indicated, since Hunt had also played so important a part in the final act of this long drama.

Hunt had been talking animatedly to my airmen, and he now invited Blaauw and myself to his cabin. I kept up a rapid running fire of questions to Hunt, asking him to answer quickly. He has a keen brain, and it was not long before I had the main outlines of his amazing story. . . .

In the western Indian Ocean, which embraces the East African coast, Madagascar, and other lesser islands, it is normal to find deep water close to land. The people of the Comores have apparently always practised deep-line fishing.

By late December, 1952, the leaflets that Hunt had taken in October had, by orders of the Governor, been distributed to all the islands and by special runners about them, so that the more intelligent natives at least were aware, even if they could not believe, that the enormous sum of 50,000 colonial francs (£100) would be paid for one fish.

On the night of December 20, Ahmed Hussein, of Domoni, a small village on the south-east coast of Anjouan, went out with another man in his canoe to fish. Hussein hooked a large fish which he eventually subdued by battering its head, a merciful way of killing a fish, but scientifically a shocking tragedy.

The fish was thrown down outside Hussein's hut, just as it was, without scaling or gutting it, despite that oven-like climate, and next morning taken to the local market for sale. It was about to be cut up when a native teacher advised them that it looked like the fish on the leaflet.

The instructions on the leaflet were clear. "Do not cut it or clean it or scale it, but take it at once to some responsible person," and who more so than Hunt, whose schooner, by a miracle, was known to be anchored at Mutsamudu on the other side of the island, about twenty-five miles away. But what a twenty-five miles that was, the path mostly through deep, densely bushed valleys and over mountains!

It still remains in my mind as one of the most astonishing things of this whole story that anything could stir people like the Comoroans to the stage of even considering carrying that 90-lb. fish a terrific distance over such hard country in blazing tropical heat. It was only the fabulous reward that could have got them to do it.

My blood ran cold as Hunt continued his story. The uncleaned fish remained first in the close tropical night and then that whole day in torrid heat. It is a miracle that it had not liquefied in putrefaction long before it reached Hunt. It may be the preservative nature of its oil that saved it.

Hunt recognized the fish at once as a coelacanth. It was already putrefying and he had no formalin. He told his crew to cut it for salting, but of course the insides were left intact, most of them.

Then, wisely, he questioned the natives. Was this fish known to them? Oh, yes, they knew it well; they were rare but caught regularly. They called them "Kombessa," and they were not much valued as food when fresh, but were good salted.

Hunt had to act, and he did so with speed. He set out in his schooner and arrived at Pamanzi on the following day, December 22. He informed the Governor of his find, the local doctor willingly gave him all the formalin available, and Hunt himself injected this into all the parts of the fish, and from what I saw he did it well. He also got the Governor to promise that if I came for the fish personally the French would not attempt to claim it.

I told Hunt that I should be giving this animal a scientific name, and that I proposed *Malania hunti*, the latter to honour him for his important part.

He asked if I could not somehow bring in the French, as his relations with them were important, his living depended on that. After discussion he said that while it would be very flattering to have his name linked with the coelacanth, he preferred *Malania anjouanae*, after Dr. Malan and the island of Anjouan.

I told Hunt that I was prepared to continue the offer of a reward of £100 for another coelacanth, and that if he got another in their waters, it was to be offered to the French.

I looked hard at Hunt's schooner, not suspecting that I should never see it again: for a bare two weeks later they were caught in a cyclone and the boat was destroyed and sunk. . . .

We returned to the Residence and there were speeches and toasts. The Governor opened a bottle of very precious old brandy of famous vintage. Repeatedly Blaauw warned me that we should take off as soon as possible. The clouds were low and threatening, and at intervals there was rain.

We parted with cordial adieux from the Governor and his lady. I sent off brief cables to my wife, to Dr. Malan, and to the President of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, to say that it was a true coelacanth.

Hastily, we left for the airstrip. The box? Yes, there it was, safe in the lorry in the shade, and soon it was in the Dakota, where I opened the lid and looked inside as well, just to be sure. We had spent barely three hours on Pamanzi, and yet it seemed almost an age.

I paid Hunt the reward money and something for his own expenses, we said our last goodbyes, and climbed aboard. The doors were shut and the motors started. I got into that "Mae West" suit.

I looked hard at the airstrip, as I had seen Blaauw doing several times before we got aboard. It was short, all too short, and the little wind of the early north-west monsoon came directly over the not inconsiderable

hill whose steep southerly slopes marked its northern end.

We must take off running straight at that hill, and I did not see how a plane of this size could hope to achieve sufficient elevation in so short a distance. However, I was no pilot and Blaauw was clearly one of the very best; so I strapped myself in and reflected that if we did hit the hill it would be over very quickly. It would certainly be a spectacular way to die, and, anyway, I had seen the coelacanth.

It was 10 a.m. on Monday, December 29. The engines roared in their test, slowed down, and suddenly we were off in a tearing rush of sound. I found myself gripping the seat and staring through the small air-hole.

We left the ground and suddenly the sea and the slopes of the hill tilted so sharply that I caught my breath. Blaauw was banking steeply and the wing-tip was so near the trees that I expected it to hit, but we were safely away. Below, I could see the last of the tiny figures on the edge of the strip. One stood out in front waving. I assumed it was Hunt, and hoped that he would not be left to face unexpected repercussions, though he seemed to be very much at ease there.

We went westwards and up, up, up, into the towering cumulus clouds whose marbled summits Blaauw estimated to reach up to at least 30,000 feet. They certainly were awe-inspiring and disquieting, great tumbled mountains of dense whirling vapour with little clear air between, white and grey and black, some with electric storms inside their piled-up masses, so that they were at intervals lit up in sections.

Up we went, plunging into almost solid-looking clouds, inside which it was almost dark; then out again into narrow shafts of brilliant sunshine, sudden transitions which were as vivid as the intermittent flashing of a floodlight in a darkened room. I felt the intense cold even through my "Mae West."

BLAAUW took the plane up to about 15,000 feet and then we steadied down, but I could not rest, for the weather looked very bad. All the crowded events of the recent past hours had keyed me to a pitch of intense excitement; it was almost an intoxication. I went to the cockpit and stood behind the two pilots, who wore earphones.

Suddenly Letley made some signs to Blaauw, and started to write down a message, which he showed to Blaauw, who flashed a quick glance at me and then read it again. Letley handed it to me, and on it I saw: "Managed to intercept a message stating that a squadron of French fighter planes left Diego Suarez before we took off from Dzaoudzi with orders to intercept us and to compel us to turn back to Madagascar."

My heart missed a beat. The two pilots were staring intently at me, while I did some rapid calculations. "What speed can they do?" I asked.

"Don't know exactly," said Letley, "but they are very much faster than we are."

"Do you think it possible for them to overhaul us before we get to Lumbo?"

Letley nodded.

Where I had disliked those clouds before, now there could not be too many for my liking. My mind was racing. "Any hope of escaping in a cloud?" I asked.

"Radar," said Letley.

"Well," I said slowly. "I don't know how you chaps feel about this but I'm not going back. I don't believe they would dare to shoot us down if we refused to turn. I would be prepared to take that chance."

Letley suddenly burst out laughing and Blaauw grinned. So deeply had I been engrossed in weighing every aspect of the situation that it was some seconds before I realized that this was a hoax. I made no comment, I was not even angry. It was such a terrific relief, and I went inside, put my sleeping bag on the icy floor near the box and tried to rest.

I must have dozed off, for I woke with a start to a shout in my ears. Ralston's head was poked through the door and he was gesturing ahead. "We can see land," he shouted. I was up in an instant.

At 12.05 p.m. we landed at Lumbo. The *Chefe* of the airport ran out and eagerly sought my news. I told him we had got it and he stared at the box. Could he see the fish? I shook my head, for I had resolved that no one would see it before Dr. Malan.

It was baking hot, the wind from the land almost scorched the skin. We did not stay long and after hasty but cordial adieux, took off at 12.55 p.m. into a mizzling north-wester. Although weather reports stated that it was cloudy with rain most of the way south, Blaauw said he hoped to reach Lourenço Marques by 6 p.m. and to get to Durban that night. It seemed ambitious, but he was the expert.

This was almost the worst part of the flight. We went up to 15,000 feet again; there was nothing to see but cloud, and it was beastly cold in that unlined metal shell.

Blaauw was not far out in his calculations. We touched down at Lourenço Marques at 6.20 p.m. and took off at 6.45 p.m. In the rain and the gathering gloom it seemed a flight that would never end. . . .

I was first one off the plane when we landed at Durban, and was immediately blinded by a battery of flash-bulbs. In that fraction of a second's vision I was appalled to see a seething crowd whose dimensions enlarged as other flashes flared. How on earth had all these people got there? My bewilderment and dismay increased when George Moore of the South African Broadcasting Corporation grabbed my arm, pushed a microphone under my nose, and started to question me.

The sounds from my lips were more frog-like than human, and, indeed, when my son in Grahamstown heard those words from our radio set, he said to my wife, "But Mum, that's not Dad."

In this confused milling crowd I was moved towards the office. I needed a drink badly and asked for coffee. A customs officer pushed a form under my nose, put a pen in my hand, and asked me to sign. The officer in charge said that the Commander-in-Chief in Pretoria was waiting on the telephone. Would I speak to him? I made my formal report and received his congratulations.

He asked if I was now finished with the plane. I told him that I wished to go to Cape Town in the morning to show the animal to Dr. Malan. He promised to make arrangements. By now Blaauw was clearly resigned to anything, and told his crew.

Only later was I able to get my wife on the telephone at Grahamstown, when I gave her a brief account of events and told her my plans.

My coffee had got cold, so they fetched more, and it was scarcely easing my parched throat when George Moore brought me to earth with a bump, saying that he wanted me to say something over the microphone, as the whole of South Africa was waiting. Later I discovered that all programmes had been dislocated for this purpose.

This was terrible. It was already 9 p.m., we had provisionally arranged to take off for Cape Town at 3.30 a.m., and I was so weary that it was an effort to utter any word at all. I looked at him in dismay and said, "What must I say man?"

"Anything you like. Even just a message."

Suddenly I remembered that I had made some notes, and told Moore that

KNOWLEDGE—1

As knowledge increases,
wonder deepens.

Charles Morgan

I would be ready in twenty minutes. To my dismay he shouted: "That will be fine, Professor. You take as long as you like."

The notes were still in the plane and one of the crew went to seek them while I drank more hot coffee and tried to compose my mind. I must not make a hash of this. Those notes were merely a sketchy scrawl. The man came back, the sheets were pushed into my hand, and I sorted them out while those who filled the room shuffled and pressed tight around me like a wall, though I could scarcely see them through the black mists of weariness that enclosed me.

I began to speak, or rather to croak at the microphone, my throat muscles almost refusing to function, and then suddenly I was no longer aware of my surroundings but almost miraculously back in it all, living over again, the strain and agony and suspense. It was so real that when I told how I had found myself weeping at my first sight of the creature on Hunt's vessel, I was there again and even though I knew that tears had again run from my eyes, I did not care.

Once from sheer exhaustion my voice failed completely, and I had to stop and gesture for more coffee, then went on. At the end I felt like a pricked balloon, and just sat hunched up while swirling black mists shot with points of light submerged me; but Moore brought me up by asking if I had any idea of the name I intended to give this creature.

I said that I was naming it provisionally, *Malania anjouanae*, to honour Dr. Malan and the island of Anjouan where it was found.

There was dead silence, then a sudden burst of applause.

Moore pushed the microphone nearer and said: "Now just something in Afrikaans, Professor. You must not disappoint our Afrikaans listeners."

Only half conscious now, I tried to rouse myself, and from far off, speaking of this same event in Afrikaans, heard a strange voice that it was hard to realize was my own. The words came without volition. I have never had the courage to ask to listen to a recording of that part.

"When can we see the coelacanth?" my friends asked, and this was drowned in a chorus from the press, who asked to photograph it. There was near consternation when I shook my head. Dr. Malan must be the first to see it.

Then came a telephone call from Pretoria to say that Dr. Malan was resting and on holiday. In view of his age it would be too much for him to journey from the Strand, where he was staying, to Cape Town.

They had obviously mistaken my intentions. I said that I wished to take the coelacanth to him wherever he might be, and unless he expressly forbade it, would do so. I added that if all else failed I would push the thing there on a wheelbarrow myself.

A call was put through to my wife in Grahamstown. I told her that I would be flying on to Cape Town, and asked her to bring coffee and food for seven to the Grahamstown aerodrome. We would land there at 6 a.m., I also asked for four copies of my *Sea Fishes of Southern Africa*.

Then, at 12.20 a.m. I telephoned Brigadier Melville in Pretoria for permission to take my wife on the flight to Cape Town. He whistled; there was silence for a few seconds. Women are never permitted on military aircraft. Then he said: "It would be highly irregular, of course, highly irregular. But everything about this flight has been irregular, so I suppose you can do it. O.K. . . ."

We took off at 4.50 a.m., and touched down at Grahamstown at 7.05 a.m. My wife, a sleepless night's ravages skilfully concealed, served coffee and food, and we all got aboard and were off at 7.40 a.m.

Over Bredasdorp I was in front with Blaauw and Letley, discussing our possible return flight for that day. Letley suddenly interrupted by pointing to his earphones and wrote down a message which he showed to Blaauw, then handed to me, "Message from Dr. Malan, he thanks you very much for having taken the trouble to come so far, but he does not wish to see the fish and wishes you a safe return to Grahamstown."

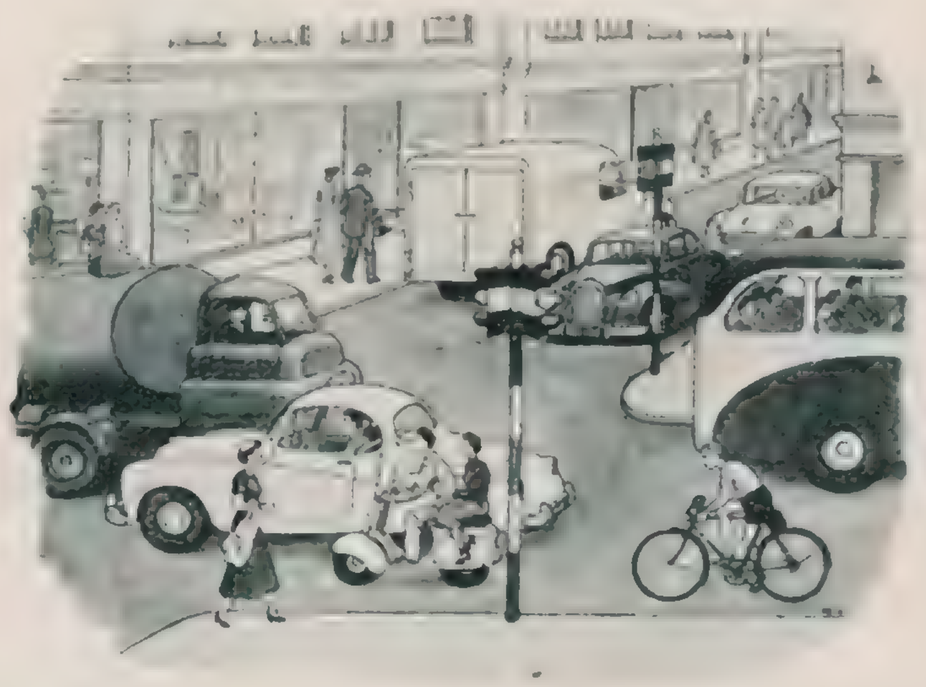
This was a shock. I put the paper into my pocket and said, "Oh, well, now we are so far we can lunch in Cape Town and go back early this afternoon." Privately I decided that I was going to make quite certain there that the message really came from Dr. Malan.

I looked down to see them both grinning somewhat impishly, and this time knew at once what they were up to and could cheerfully have killed them. They knew full well that only Dr. Malan himself could have turned me back.

At 10.35 a.m. we touched down at Ysterplaat Airport. The Cape commander-in-chief, Colonel Louis du Toit, and other officers were there to meet us, and a lorry with guards was ready for the coelacanth. Dr. Malan's compliments, and would we spend the day and have lunch with them? A function

Spot the Lawbreaker

Somewhere in this scene, the law is being broken. Can you see where? A barrister gives the answer on page 32



DRAWN BY RONALD LAMPITT

had been arranged for teatime with numerous guests. So there was to be no return that day.

We were soon at the Strand, where we were warmly welcomed at their holiday home by Dr. and Mrs. Malan. He can best be described as a grand old man, greatly respected, admired, and loved by his people. No man can ask more. She is a gracious and dignified woman whose life is clearly centred on the care and service of this man. The bond between them is almost tangible, and their home breathes serenity and peace. Their young adopted daughter Marietjie was intrigued by all the fuss and followed me around. She called me "*Oom Vis*" or "Uncle Fish."

The box containing the coelacanth was put under a tree on the lawn. I had it opened and showed the fish to Dr. and Mrs. Malan, and to my wife as well, for she had not seen it before. Dr. Malan looked for some moments, especially at the head, then turned to me, and with a twinkle in his eye said, "My, it is ugly. Do you mean to say we once looked like that?"

I replied, "H'm! I have seen people that are uglier." Then I gave him a scale from the animal, which he handed to his wife with instructions that it was to be put in the family archives.

Word of our arrival soon got round, and crowds of curious sightseers were constantly passing. Despite the guard under the tree, I kept a wary eye on the coffin myself, and soon noticed a secretive-looking man moving about the drive and along the fence. I watched him for some time, and eventually told Colonel du Toit I couldn't help feeling suspicious. He was greatly amused: the man was the Prime Minister's special guard.

In the afternoon hundreds of guests from all over the south-western Cape, invited by telephone only that morning, assembled at teatime. Dr. Malan had asked me privately if I would address them, to which I agreed. After several speeches, the company, composed of leading scientific and public personalities of the Cape, filed slowly past the coelacanth bier, while crowds assembled outside in the street, and their cameras constantly clicked and buzzed.

We took off at 8.30 a.m. next morning for Grahamstown. On the way we cut across the Cape Flats to the Strand, where I got Blaauw to circle the Malans' house twice low down. Judging by the effect on the hastily emerging populace, they expected bombs, but we saw the Malans come out on the lawn and wave. We "bombed" them with several copies of the early morning papers, then turned east and up, over the high escarpment that soon blotted out the line of surf where their house lay.

At Grahamstown, Mayor McGahey and numerous citizens were there to meet us. It was a great joy to see Miss Latimer there, too. Her presence brought back poignant memories of the first coelacanth. Then she was a young girl, finding her feet. Now she was a mature woman of established position, her museum famous. She kissed me before them all, and nobody was embarrassed, not even myself.

The crew of the Dakota had got the box out and were standing round politely. In a brief ceremony each of the four officers was presented with an inscribed volume of my book, while the others each received a special memento. They were soon aboard and off, and we watched that huge machine fade to a minute speck, then she was gone. As she vanished it was as if a curtain had suddenly been dropped at the close of a tense act.

Within a few days my wife and I were to pose for photographs and become film and television stars all over the world. But for me the real adventure was still ahead, when I began to examine the coelacanth and to pass on the wonderful information that was eagerly awaited by scientists everywhere. THE END

"Old Fourlegs" by J. L. B. Smith is published as a book by Longmans, price 21s.

The winged invaders

Continued from page 13

reports, marshalling available resources of men, machines and bran.

Out at Tarhunna, where the hoppers —having eaten all else—now seethe on the trunks of the roadside eucalyptus trees, there is an F.A.O. locust expert, flown in from Rome. For this is a world battle. As the Garibulli sector was only an infinitesimal part of the Libyan battle, so the Libyan front is only a small part of an international fight against this scourge of humanity that has brought famine and disaster since the days of the Pharaohs.

There was a time when this North African shore was the granary of Rome. Then, in 125 B.C., the locusts descended —and in Cyrenaica alone 800,000 people perished of starvation. For centuries such dread visitations were fatalistically accepted. Locusts were like the floods and the drought. Man could but submit.

But now at last the challenge of the Eighth Plague has been resolutely taken up. The locust has been internationally posted as a major enemy of humanity against which all Man's science, ingenuity and organizing power must be marshalled. Over the last twenty-five years a vast world defence network against this terrible insect has been built up.

The nerve-centre of this network is in London.

To the Anti-Locust Research Centre in the west tower of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington flows a ceaseless stream of locust movement messages from observers spread over forty countries. Here, too, sits the master strategist, Dr. B. P. Uvarov and his specialist staff, digesting the mass of information, plotting it on world maps, summing up its significance and sending out a reverse flow of warnings and forecasts to the far-flung anti-locust fronts.

Now sixty-seven years old, Boris Petrovitch Uvarov has devoted his life to the study and pursuit of this human enemy, the locust. Graduating from St. Petersburg University he was, as a young man, first entomologist on one of the Imperial Cotton Estates in Transcaspia, then director of the bureau of entomology at Stavropol on the Volga. Studying the tumultuous swarmings of locust hoppers in the vast flooded reed-beds of Russian rivers, young Uvarov penetrated the age-old mystery of the Eighth Plague, discovered the locust's "secret weapon."

For until then science, no less than the wretched peasant in their path, had been content to regard the appearance of locust swarms as a visitation. From time to time these great plagues would sweep across the earth. Then, once again, the locusts would vanish. Whence did they come? Where did they go? No one knew.

Uvarov's answer was simple yet sensational. The locust led a double life. It had Jekyll and Hyde personalities for in its "solitary phase" it was the homely, happy-go-lucky individualistic grasshopper; in its "gregarious phase," the same insect became the voracious milling and swarming locust —a thing (almost) of terror.

The grasshopper's appalling transformation was brought about, explained Uvarov, by a sequence of natural conditions which led to the crowding of large accumulations of hoppers into a very small area. Thus, the flooding of the deltas of the Russian rivers flowing into the Caspian and the Aral Seas produced first an abundance of vegetation, in which the hoppers multiplied and flourished, then as the waters rose again, a severe restriction of the land area so that they were crowded together in great agitated masses.

In the deserts of Arabia and Africa, rainfall, similarly, would give rise to a temporary plenty, shortly followed by drought—and the same desperate congestion. Hungry, vastly excited by the seething mass into which they were forced, the hoppers underwent a radical change not only of nature and habits but even of coloration and bodily structure. Grasshoppers turned into locusts.

After the revolution, Uvarov came to London and in 1921 published his theory. For a time some scientists remained sceptical, continuing to insist that there were two separate species. But Uvarov's theory could be—and was—demonstrated in the laboratory. Put a green grasshopper in a glass cage with a mass of others and he will turn black-and-white or black-and-yellow like the hoppers of the Desert Locust. Pick a Desert Locust hopper from his seething swarm, isolate him in his own glass cage, and he will become again a docile green grasshopper.

Uvarov's discovery had a more than merely scientific interest. It meant that for the first time it became possible effectively to combat locust plagues. For in nature the areas where conditions are likely to give rise to the overcrowding of hoppers are limited. The overall strategy of the locust war could now be directed towards pinpointing, controlling—and possibly even ultimately removing—these "outbreak areas."

With two of the three main species of African locust—the Red Locust and the Migratory Locust—the battle is well on the way to being won. The "outbreak areas" have been identified and are now kept under continuous observation by resident staffs. But with the Desert Locust it has proved more difficult. For *Schistocerca gregaria* breeds in many places, and particularly in the remote deserts of Ethiopia and Arabia. Just where eggs may be laid and swarming arise depends on rainfall—and in the desert rainfall is erratic and unpredictable.

Nevertheless, patiently down the years, the picture has been built up, the clues accumulated. To Uvarov and his staff in the Anti-Locust Research Centre in South Kensington the endless reports flow in. . . .

A tribesman in the remote Sudan sees a yellow cloud overhead, reports as he has been coached to do to a village headman, who passes on the news to the District Officer. The message goes off to London. From the bright yellow colour of the swarm, the centre's entomologists know that these locusts will deposit their eggs as soon as they reach damp ground. In the mud-walled markets of Sharjah on the oven-hot Persian Gulf, bundles of dead locusts—a delicacy esteemed by Arabs —appear for sale. An official notices it—and the news travels to London.

When Britain set up the first international locust intelligence centre in 1929, its staff consisted of one-and-a-half men; its budget was £500 a year. Uvarov, then a part-time worker, was the "half."

"In the early years," he recalls, "it was very difficult. Each country wanted to go its own way, thought it could manage for itself. When the swarms came they called it an invasion and sent off a strong note to their neighbour." He shrugged slightly and smiled, a gentle, unobtrusive little man with grey hair and round-rimmed spectacles. "But, you know, locusts don't know any frontiers. When he arrives in Jordan, a locust doesn't say: 'I come from Israel' but 'from the country to the west.'"

Once again it was the locusts themselves who drove home the truth of Uvarov's argument. Slowly the hard lesson was learned. Today, the Anti-Locust Research Centre is the focal point of a world network covering fifty countries. At Abercorn in Northern Rhodesia is the permanent headquarters of the International Red Locust Control Organization; at Kara, on the Middle Niger, is the control centre for watching the only known "outbreak area" of the African Migratory Locust; at Nairobi there is the Desert Locust Survey headquarters, with a hundred technicians, four hundred vehicles, one hundred power-sprayers and power-dusters and a base-and-supply camp in Arabia near Jeddah.

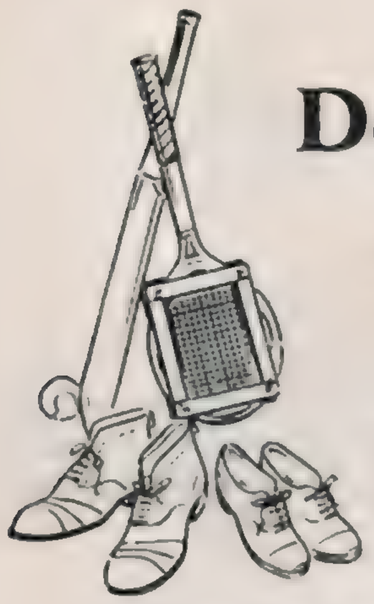
Anti-locust work has indeed been so successful that in East Africa, free of devastation for some years, settlers are now beginning to grumble about its cost. But this enemy is tough. Just when he seems most quiescent, he may suddenly break out again in all his frightfulness. Last year, Morocco was swept by an invasion which did £4,500,000 worth of damage. In 1952, millions of farmers and peasants in a great crescent from East Africa to India found themselves facing ruin. In four months some vast flying swarms covered four thousand miles. In Iran, a million acres became a great egg-field, often at a density of 70,000 eggs to the square yard.

But now the nature of the threat

Spot the Lawbreaker

See page 31

RIDING side-saddle on the pillion of a motor-scooter or motor-cycle may be common on the Continent, but it is strictly illegal in Britain, says a barrister-at-law. Both the man and the girl are breaking Section 16 of the Road Traffic Act of 1930. The driver can be fined £5 for a first offence, and £10 for any subsequent offence. The passenger has aided and abetted him, and in one recent case a girl was fined 10s.



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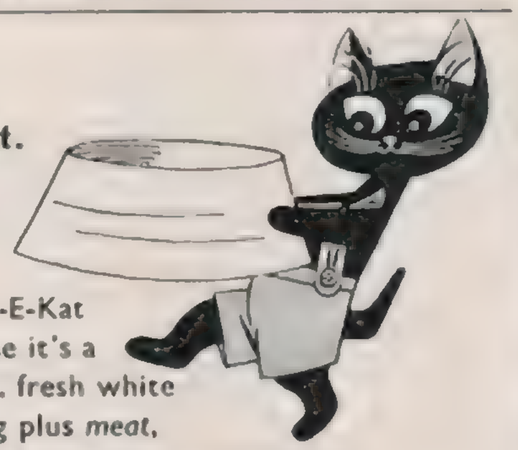

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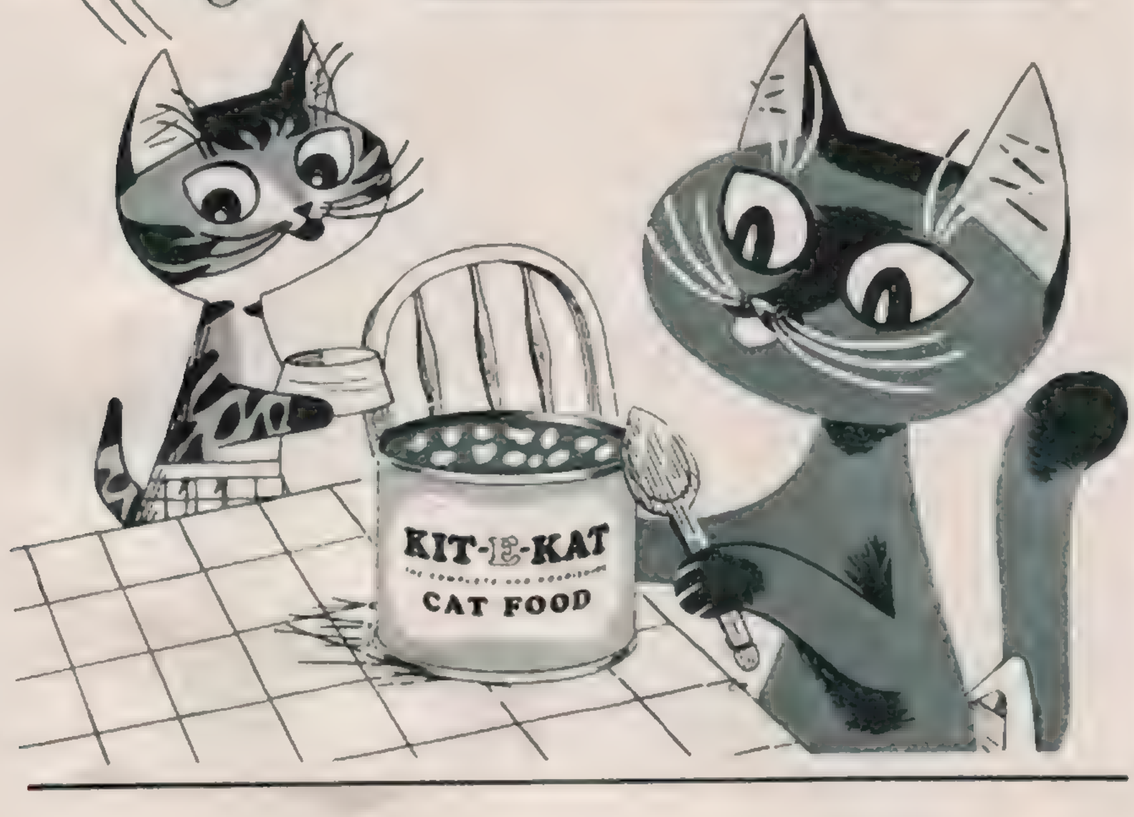

Oh-oh DRY SCALP!

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THERE's only one sure way to check Dry Scalp. Massage a few drops of Vaseline Brand Hair Tonic into your scalp for 20 seconds every morning.

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was understood. Counter-measures slashed frontier barriers. In Jordan, Jew and Arab worked together against the common enemy. The United States dispatched spraying aircraft—and so did the U.S.S.R. It was evident now that this was all humanity's battle and the study went on.

What is it that determines the fertility of the locust? (Though the average is three hundred, females lay up to one thousand eggs.)

What is the effect of its body temperatures, its "heat balance," on its behaviour?

What are the precise factors impelling the hoppers to swarm? (For, if these were exactly known, it might be possible to make some change in conditions in the "outbreak areas" which would wipe the locust plagues from the face of the earth.)

Inside the South Kensington laboratory the gregarious locusts and the solitary grasshoppers flutter and seethe in their thousands. The temperature is an even eighty-two degrees. White lamps, simulating the tropical sun, shine steadily inside the green-painted, glass-fronted cages—until 4 p.m. each day, when tropical night suddenly falls.

The hoppers champ their iron jaws and flick about rattling lightly against the glass fronts of the cages. Here are Red Locusts from Rhodesia, their wings flushed a delicate purple. Here is a big, fine Disneyesque grasshopper imported from one of the southern states of the U.S.A. Near the centre of the room, suspended by delicate silver wires around their bodies, a score or so of locusts are flying energetically—and moving not at all—into a stream of air directed upon them from a small fan. They put in three-hour flying stints daily. Below, in cages, are their "controls." The experiment has been set up to study the effect of flying on a locust's development.

Blow gently on the head of a locust and immediately it begins to flap its wings in the action of flight. It is a reflex action, conducted through several minute patches of sensitive hair on the creature's head. This was the discovery of a Danish entomologist: cover the hairs with cellulose, he found, and the wings no longer respond.

THE mechanism of flight—and what determines its direction—is clearly of the greatest importance. The theory has been elaborated that the flying swarms follow the "rain winds" or convection currents—since the mature female must find damp ground in which to deposit her eggs. In East Africa, field teams have put in much work on the relation of local weather factors to the flight of swarms. And now the World Meteorological Organization has sent a team of meteorologists to Nairobi to study tropical weather over various areas of central Africa in order to forward these researches.

"The meteorological approach is beginning to look definitely promising," said Dr. Uvarov in his room in South Kensington. "But, of course, the practical difficulty is to have sufficient meteorological services. There are only half a dozen stations in all Arabia—and most of those are on the coasts. But, well, it's something we're working on. . . ."

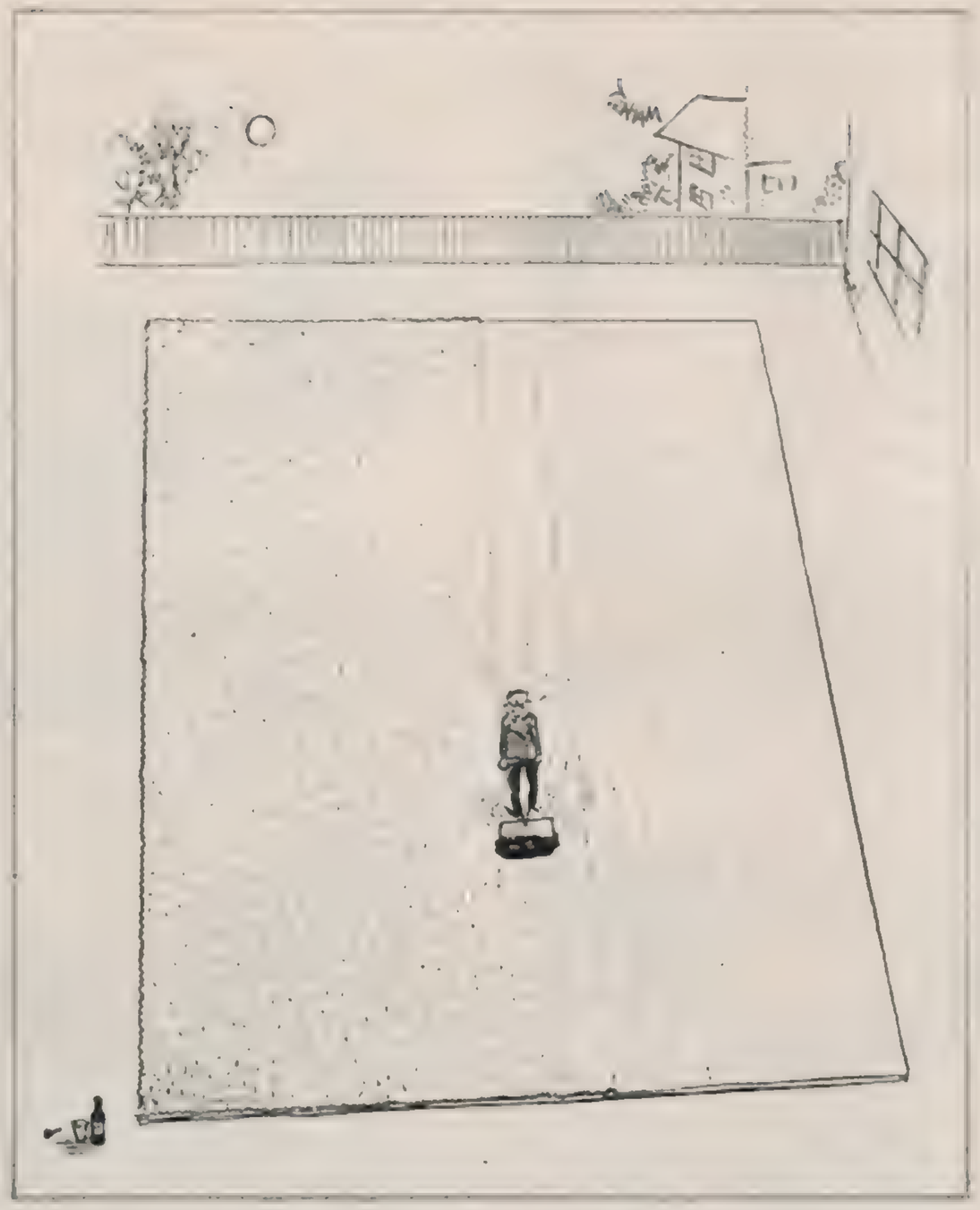
Would the locust ever be defeated? Could this ancient plague ever be banished from the face of the earth?

Dr. Uvarov fingered several new reports that had just come in from Asmara, Ethiopia. Was he looking down the years to the days when, as a young entomologist, he stood excitedly watching the fantastic swarming of the hoppers in the reed-beds of Russian rivers, all seething and leaping into the air as their agitation mounted? Or to the day when, as part-time entomologist, he had first come to this great human battle which was to spread outwards, from South Kensington, over a large part of the world?

"Well," he said, "the locusts are still ahead of us. We keep moving forward, but the locusts are always just a little ahead. . . ."

He smiled, a little wistfully perhaps.

"But some day, you know, some day, perhaps, we shall really catch up with them." THE END



Jon Pertwee, comedian in a hurry

Continued from page 17

a week from variety, in addition to the large sums he earns from advertising, individual appearances on radio and television, and films.

B.B.C. producers agree that Pertwee is a perfectionist who is likely to lose his temper if things are not just as he wants them. Leslie Bridgmont, who produced *Merry Go Round* and *Waterlogged Spa*, recalls that even on radio Pertwee used make-up to get quickly into the spirit of each character. Once he dashed behind a screen to put on his Postman make-up and found it was not there.

"He did the part in a seething rage," says Bridgmont. "When he came off he called me everything and swore I'd taken the make-up as a joke. He apologized later when he found it in his trouser pocket."

According to Bridgmont, Pertwee speaks, thinks, moves and reacts at top speed. "His temper is just part of an impetuous nature with an excess of energy. It vanishes as quickly as it comes."

Pertwee—"I loathe convention"—is an individualist. At school he hated team games. Even now he chooses fast and furious pastimes which he can enjoy alone, and which have led him from one accident to another.

While still at school he bought a motor-cycle. He ran it into a wall the first time he rode it and knocked himself unconscious. Undaunted, he took up grass track motor-cycle racing, and later raced cars at Brooklands.

Since the war he has owned "about fifteen" fast cars. Testing an Italian model on the sands at Southport, he ran into a patch of soft sand which brought the car to a sudden stop from eighty miles an hour, badly bruising his ribs. Another time he was thrown out of his hydroplane, called Tear 'Em Up, when it struck driftwood at forty miles an hour. He somersaulted fifteen feet before hitting the water.

An excellent water skier, Pertwee made an attempt on the world water ski speed record when on tour in Australia four years ago. He was towed by an aeroplane instead of the usual speedboat. The aeroplane got him up to seventy miles an hour, then, still climbing, started to lift him clear of the water. Pertwee had to let go of the towing rope. Dragged off balance, he skidded and bounced a hundred feet across the water "like a flat stone."

Violence pursues Pertwee even outside his hobbies. He was coshed with a butcher's steel when, barehanded, he tackled four thieves who broke into a garage beneath a flat in which he was visiting a friend. During the war he suffered a fractured skull and an eye injury when a landmine exploded on naval barracks at Portsmouth.

Pertwee's comedy is charged with the same zest and physical energy that he puts into his sport. He attacks his audiences with a battery of weird voices, startling grimaces, and humour that switches from the sophisticated cabaret style to rustic knockabout and stunts. Critics have described his style as brash, rumbustious, ebullient, and uproarious.

In his present show at the Coventry Theatre he makes twenty lightning costume changes, rides a tandem, does a Rumanian gipsy dance, plays the guitar and sings while doing acrobatics on a rickety chair, and does a contortionist's trick of drinking a glass of water placed on the floor without touching it with his hands.

Not surprisingly, Pertwee has frequently hurt himself during his act. At Coventry recently he had a fall which aggravated an old injury received on tour in Australia, when he fell during his act and punctured a vein in his hip.

Pertwee's distaste for convention extends to his daily routine. He dictates to his secretary while still in bed. When he has dealt with his letters, he takes the telephone to his bathroom—a glass-tiled, tastefully modernized coal cellar—and makes and receives calls from his bath.

When, towards midday, Pertwee decides to dress, he may put on any one of a number of unconventional outfits from sky blue jeans and a shirt of yellow and blue checks as large as playing cards, to a casual, loose-fitting grey flannel suit of his own design.

"He not only likes to be different, he likes to be first to be different," says Leslie Bridgmont. Pertwee claims he was first to re-introduce fancy waistcoats, and pioneered the wearing of coloured evening dress at public functions.

Private transport is another field in which Pertwee likes to lead. His Corgi, the ex-parachute scooter, was one of the first in London, and so was his Messerschmitt three-wheeler. This he promptly overturned at speed on a corner. His passenger, Bonar Colleano, the actor, was uninjured, but Pertwee displaced three vertebrae.

At present Pertwee has a hard-top Jaguar coupé, a Chevrolet, a Messerschmitt, a Vespa, and a caravan. He sometimes parks them in a line which begins outside his house and finishes half-way down the street.

Pertwee, described by his brother, writer Michael Pertwee, as "the least snobbish man alive," has lived for fourteen years in the same small flat in Chelsea, and the local people have watched him rise to success.

"He's the same as ever he was, with a smile and a friendly word for everyone," says Mrs. Violet Ellis, a local housewife. She has often seen Pertwee playing hopscotch and football with the children in the play street. "When my George was eight he invited Jon to his birthday party, and he came along and did some sketches for the children."

Pertwee believes in "good old-fashioned thrift." On tour he never stays in hotels. He hates the formality of hotel life, and also finds his caravan much cheaper. He smokes little and, except for an occasional glass of wine with meals, does not drink.

The son of playwright Roland Pertwee, Jon Pertwee attended preparatory school, public school, and a co-educational progressive school before going to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Only the progressive school was able to support his independent spirit and enthusiasm for practical jokes. The stern discipline of a public school could not tame his temper. After two beatings in one day from his fagmaster, Pertwee flared up when a third was threatened. He snatched the cane and laid about the older boy furiously. The headmaster rapidly decided he would be happier in another school.

Pertwee remained irrepressible at R.A.D.A. and was encouraged to leave as a result of his habit of guying the worst attempts at acting of some of the more self-important students.

He worked in repertory, and then when war came he served as an able seaman in the Royal Navy. Later he was commissioned in the Naval Intelligence Division.

After the war he gave up his attempts to be a straight actor and turned comedian.

OTHER actors in repertory had found it nerve-racking to work with Pertwee. Once when the company, playing a serious drama, expected Pertwee to enter in his part of a young priest, he ambled on made up as an ancient gardener, the part he had played in the thriller which the company had been performing in the first half of the week. On another occasion Pertwee, playing an earnest vicar, stepped forward when he was introduced to the hero of the play and pressed an egg into his hand. Pertwee was fired.

"Since I have been paid to be funny, I've taken the whole thing much more seriously," says Pertwee. One day last February he was riding a camel down the King's Road, Chelsea, for a sequence in his recent TV series, *Round The Bend*. The noise of a passing bus caused the animal to shy and Pertwee fell off. Apparently unhurt, he continued with the show. Later in the day he set off by rail to fulfil an engagement in Torquay. He fainted in his seat, and a woman passenger revived him with smelling salts. In Torquay he went straight to a doctor who found that the fall had cracked three of his ribs. The doctor advised a plaster cast and rest in bed.

The show, said Pertwee melodramatically, must go on. The doctor insisted, but eventually lost a fierce argument. Pertwee did his act under a strong dose of morphine. THE END

Dead man's folly

Continued from page 11

think it possible that you yourself may not even know just what it is that you have seen or noticed or heard. You are aware only of the result. If I may so put it, you do not know what it is that you know. You may label that intuition if you like."

"It makes one feel such a fool," said Mrs. Oliver ruefully, "not to be able to be definite."

"We shall arrive," said Poirot encouragingly. "You say that you have had the feeling of being—how did you put it—jockeyed along? Can you explain more clearly what you mean by that?"

"Well, it's rather difficult. . . . You see, this is my murder, so to speak. I've thought it out and planned it and it all fits in—dovetails."

She paused. "Well, if you know anything at all about writers, you'll know that they can't stand suggestions. People say: 'Splendid, but wouldn't it be better if so and so did so and so?' Or: 'Wouldn't it be a wonderful idea if the victim was A instead of B?' One wants to say: 'All right then, write it yourself if you want it that way.'"

POIROT nodded sympathetically. "And that is what has been happening?" he asked.

"Not quite. That sort of silly suggestion has been made, and then I've flared up, and they've given in, but have just slipped in some quite minor, trivial suggestion; and because I've made a stand over the other thing I've accepted the triviality without noticing much."

"I see," said Poirot. "Yes—it is a method. Something rather crude and preposterous is put forward—but that is not really the point. The minor alteration is really the objective. Is that what you mean?"

"That's exactly what I mean," said Mrs. Oliver. "And, of course, I may be imagining it, and none of the things seem to matter anyway. But it's got me worried. That, and a sort of—well—atmosphere."

"Who has made these suggestions of alterations to you?"

"Different people," said Mrs. Oliver. "If it was just one person I'd be more sure of my ground. But it's not just one person—although I think it is really. I mean it's one person working through other quite unsuspecting people."

"Have you any idea who that one person is?"

Mrs. Oliver shook her head. "It's somebody very clever and very careful," she said. "It might be anybody."

"Who is there?" asked Poirot. "The cast of characters must be fairly limited."

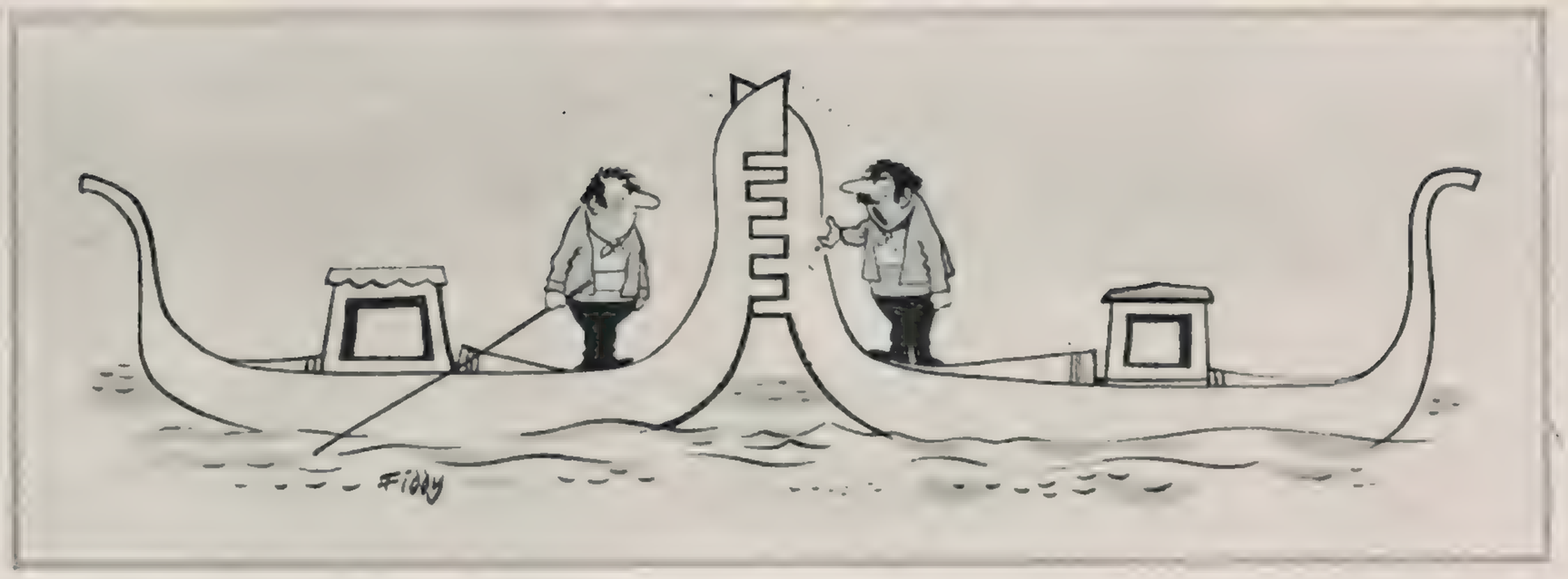
"Well," began Mrs. Oliver, "there's Sir George Stubbs, who owns this place; rich and plebeian and frightfully stupid outside business, I should think, but probably dead sharp in it. And there's Lady Stubbs—Hattie—about twenty years younger than he is; rather beautiful, but dumb as a fish—in fact, *I* think she's definitely half-witted; married him for his money, of course, and doesn't think about anything but clothes and jewels.

"Then there's Michael Weyman—he's an architect, quite young, and good looking in a craggy kind of artistic way. He's designing a tennis pavilion for Sir George, and repairing the Folly."

"Folly? What is that?"

"It's one of those little sort of temple things, white, with columns. You've probably seen them at Kew.... Then there's Miss Brewis—she's a sort secretary-housekeeper, who runs things and writes letters—very grim and efficient. And then there are the people round about who come in and help; a young married couple who have taken a cottage down by the river—Alec Legge and his wife Peggy; and Captain Warburton, who's the Masterton's agent.

"And the Mastertons, of course, and old Mrs. Folliat who lives in what used to be the Lodge. Her husband's people



owned Nasse originally. But they've died out, or been killed in wars, and there were lots of death duties, so the last heir sold the place."

Poirot considered this list of characters, but at the moment they were only names to him. He asked: "Whose idea was the Murder Hunt?"

"Mrs. Masterton's, I think. She's the local M.P.'s wife, very good at organizing. It was she who persuaded Sir George to have the fête here. You see, the place has been empty for so many years that she thinks people will be keen to pay and come in to see it."

"That all seems straightforward enough," said Poirot.

"It all *seems* straightforward," said Mrs. Oliver obstinately, "but it isn't. I tell you, Monsieur Poirot, there's something wrong."

Poirot looked at Mrs. Oliver and Mrs. Oliver looked back at Poirot.

"How have you accounted for my presence here—for your summons to me?" Poirot asked.

"That was easy," said Mrs. Oliver. "You're to give away the prizes for the Murder Hunt."

She glanced at her watch. "It's just tea-time. We'll go back to the house and then you can meet them all."

She took a different path from the one by which Poirot had come.

"We pass by the boat-house this way," Mrs. Oliver explained. As she spoke the boat-house came into view. It jutted out on to the river and was a picturesque thatched affair. "That's

KNOWLEDGE—2

Against knowledge I have, as the light cynic observed of a certain lady's past, only one serious objection—that there is so much of it.

Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch

where the Body's going to be," she went on.

"And who is going to be killed?"

"Oh—a girl hiker, who is really the Yugoslavian first wife of a young atom scientist," said Mrs. Oliver glibly.

Poirot blinked.

"But how do you arrange for a suitable body?"

"Girl Guide," said Mrs. Oliver. "Peggy Legge was going to be it, but now they want her to dress up in a turban and do the fortune-telling, so it's a girl guide called Marlene Tucker. Rather dumb and sniffs."

She added in an explanatory manner: "It's quite easy—just peasant scarves and a rucksack—and all she has to do when she hears someone coming is to flop down on the floor and arrange the cord round her neck. Rather dull for the poor kid, just sticking inside that boat-house until she's found; but I've arranged for her to have a nice bundle of comics—there's a clue scribbled on one of them as a matter of fact."

They started up a steep, zig-zagging path that led them back along the river at a higher level. At a twist through the trees they came out on a space surmounted by a small, white, pilastered temple. Standing back and frowning at it was a young man wearing dilapidated flannel trousers and a shirt of rather virulent green. He spun round towards them.

"Mr. Michael Weyman, Monsieur Hercule Poirot," said Mrs. Oliver.

The young man acknowledged the introduction with a careless nod. "Extraordinary," he said bitterly, "the places people put things. This thing here, for instance. Put up only about a year ago—quite nice of its kind and quite in keeping with the period of the house. But why here? These things were meant to be seen—but here's this poor little devil, stuck away in the midst of trees, not visible from anywhere.

"It's bedded down in concrete and there's loose soil underneath—so it's subsided. Cracked all up here—it will be dangerous soon. Better pull the whole thing down and re-erect it on the top of the bank near the house. That's my advice, but the obstinate old fool won't hear of it."

This young man, Poirot observed to himself, *assuredly does not like Sir George Stubbs.*

"Well, you architects have got to have someone who's got money to spend, or you'd never have a job," Mrs. Oliver pointed out reasonably enough. She moved on towards the house and Poirot and the dispirited architect followed her.

Their path came out from the trees and the house showed white and beautiful before them. On the bank below them a small, elderly lady was busy with secateurs on a clump of shrubs.

She climbed up to greet them, panting slightly. "Everything neglected for years," she said. "And so difficult nowadays to get a man who understands shrubs."

"Monsieur Hercule Poirot, Mrs. Folliat," said Mrs. Oliver.

The elderly lady beamed. "So this is the great Monsieur Poirot. It is kind of you to come and help us tomorrow. This clever lady here has thought out a most puzzling problem—it will be such a novelty."

Poirot said politely: "Mrs. Oliver is an old friend of mine. I was delighted to be able to respond to her request. This is indeed a beautiful spot—and what a superb and noble mansion!"

Mrs. Folliat nodded. "Yes. It was built by my husband's great-grandfather in 1790. There was an Elizabethan house previously. Our family has lived here since 1598."

Her voice was calm and matter-of-fact. Poirot looked at her with closer attention. He saw a very small and compact little person, dressed in shabby tweeds. The most noticeable feature about her were her clear china-blue eyes. Her grey hair was closely confined by a hairnet. Though obviously careless of her appearance, she had that indefinable air of being someone which is so hard to explain.

As they walked together towards the house, Poirot said diffidently: "It must be hard for you to have strangers living here."

There was a moment's pause before Mrs. Folliat answered. Her voice was clear and precise and curiously devoid of emotion.

"So many things are hard, Monsieur Poirot," she said.

It was Mrs. Folliat who led the way into the house. It was a gracious house, beautifully proportioned. Mrs. Folliat went through a door on the left into a small, daintily furnished sitting-room and on into the big drawing-room beyond, which was full of people who all seemed to be talking at once.

"George," said Mrs. Folliat, "this is Monsieur Poirot who is so kind as to come and help us. Sir George Stubbs."

Sir George, who had been talking in a loud voice, swung round. He was a big man with a rather florid red face and a slightly unexpected beard. His manner and voice were jovial, but his eyes were small and shrewd, of a particularly penetrating pale blue.

He greeted Poirot heartily. "We're so glad that your friend Mrs. Oliver managed to persuade you to come," he said. "Quite a brainwave on her part. You'll be an enormous attraction."

He looked round a little vaguely. "Hattie?" He repeated the name of his wife in a slightly sharper tone. "Hattie!"

LADY STUBBS was reclining in a big armchair at a little distance from the others. She seemed to be paying no attention to what was going on round her. Instead she was smiling down at her hand, which was stretched out on the arm of the chair. She was turning it from left to right, so that a big solitaire emerald on her third finger caught the light in its green depths.

She looked up now in a slightly startled, childlike way and said: "How do you do."

Poirot bowed over her hand.

Sir George continued his introductions. "Mrs. Masterton. . . ."

Mrs. Masterton was a somewhat monumental woman who reminded Poirot faintly of a bloodhound. She had a full, underhung jaw and large, mournful, slightly bloodshot eyes.

"Captain Warburton. . . ."

Captain Warburton, who wore a check sportscoat and had a vaguely horsy appearance, showed a lot of white teeth in a somewhat wolfish smile.

"Mr. and Mrs. Legge. . . ."

A tall young man with his face peeling badly from sunburn grinned agreeably. His wife, an attractive, freckled redhead, nodded in a friendly fashion.

"And this," said Sir George, "is Miss Brewis—who runs us all."

Miss Brewis was seated behind the large silver tea-tray. She was a spare, efficient-looking woman of forty-odd, with a brisk, pleasant manner.

"How do you do, Monsieur Poirot," she said. "I do hope you didn't have too crowded a journey? Let me give you some tea. Milk? Sugar?"

"Very little milk, Mademoiselle, and four lumps of sugar," Poirot said.

He took his cup and went and sat down by his hostess.

She was still letting the light play over the jewel on her hand, and she looked up at him with a pleased child's smile. "Look," she said. "It's pretty, isn't it?"

He had been studying her carefully. She was wearing a big coolie-style hat of vivid magenta straw. Beneath it her face showed its pinky reflection on the dead white surface of her skin. She was heavily made up in an exotic, un-English style: dead white, matt skin, vivid cyclamen lips, mascara applied

Grab this infant, will you?

Don't want him fingering the paintwork
before it's dry!
Especially as father has taken trouble
to see it all looks so bright and cheerful.
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lavishly to the eyes. Her hair showed beneath the hat, black and smooth, fitting like a velvet cap.

There was a languorous, un-English beauty about the face. She was a creature of the tropical sun, caught, as it were by chance, in an English drawing-room. But it was the eyes that startled Poirot. They had a child-like, almost vacant stare.

She had asked her question in a confidential, childish way, and it was as though to a child that Poirot answered. "It is a very lovely ring," he said.

She looked pleased. "George gave it to me yesterday," she said. "He gives me lots of things. He's very kind."

There was a pause. Then Poirot said in a conventional manner: "Devonshire is a very lovely county. Do you not think so?"

"It's nice in the daytime," said Lady Stubbs. "When it doesn't rain," she added mournfully. "But there aren't any night clubs."

"Ah, I see—you like night clubs?"

"Oh yes!" said Lady Stubbs fervently. "I like the Casino, too." She bent slightly towards him. "I won sixty thousand francs at Monte Carlo once. I put some money on number twenty-seven and it came up."

"That must have been very exciting, madame."

"Oh, it was. George gives me money to play with—but usually I lose it." She looked up at Poirot. "George is very rich. It is nice to be rich, don't you think so?"

"Very nice," said Poirot gently.

"Perhaps, if I were not rich, I should look like Amanda." Lady Stubbs's gaze went to Miss Brewis at the tea-table and studied her dispassionately. "She is very ugly, don't you think?"

MISS BREWIS looked up and came across to where they were sitting. Lady Stubbs had not spoken loudly, but Poirot wondered whether Amanda Brewis had heard.

As he withdrew his gaze, his eyes met those of Captain Warburton. The captain's gaze was ironic and amused.

Poirot endeavoured to change the subject. "Have you been very busy preparing for the fête?" he asked.

Hattie Stubbs shook her head. "Oh no, I think it is all very boring—very stupid. There are servants and gardeners. Why should not they make the preparations?"

"Oh, my dear!" It was Mrs. Folliat who spoke. She had come to sit on the sofa nearby. "Those are the ideas you were brought up with on your island estates. But life isn't like that in England these days. Nowadays one has to do nearly everything oneself."

Lady Stubbs shrugged her shoulders. "I think it is stupid. What is the good of being rich if one has to do everything oneself?"

"Some people find it fun," said Mrs. Folliat, smiling at her. "I do really. I like gardening myself, and I like preparing for a festivity like this one tomorrow."

"It will be like a party?" asked Lady Stubbs hopefully. "Like Ascot? With big hats and everyone very *chic*?"

"Well—not quite like Ascot," said Mrs. Folliat. She added gently: "But you must try and enjoy country things, Hattie. You should have helped us this morning, instead of staying in bed and not getting up until tea-time."

"I had a headache," said Hattie sulkily. Then her mood changed and she smiled affectionately at Mrs. Folliat. "But I will be good tomorrow. I will do everything you tell me."

"That's very sweet of you, dear."

"I've got a new dress to wear. It came this morning. Come upstairs with me and look at it."

Mrs. Folliat hesitated. Lady Stubbs rose to her feet and said insistently: "You must come. Please. It is a lovely dress. Come now!"

"Oh, very well." Mrs. Folliat gave a half laugh and rose.

As she went out of the room, her small figure following Hattie's tall one, Poirot saw her face and was quite startled at the weariness which had replaced her smiling composure. It was as though, relaxed and off her guard for a moment, she no longer bothered to keep up the social mask.

Captain Warburton dropped down in the chair Hattie Stubbs had just vacated. "Beautiful creature, isn't she?" He observed with the tail of his eye Sir George's exit through a french window with Mrs. Masterton and Mrs. Oliver in tow. "Bowled over old George Stubbs all right. Nothing's too good for her. Jewels, mink, all the rest of it. Whether he realizes she's a bit wanting in the top storey I've never discovered."

"What nationality is she?" Poirot asked curiously.

"I believe she comes from the West Indies. One of the old families there . . . a Creole. All very inter-married, I believe, on these islands. Accounts for the mental deficiency."

Young Mrs. Legge came over to join them. "Look here, Jim," she said, "you've got to be on my side. That tent's got to be where we all decided . . . on the far side of the lawn backing on the rhododendrons. It's the only possible place."

"Ma Masterton doesn't think so."

"Well, you've got to talk her out of it."

Sir George re-entered the window, accompanied by Mrs. Oliver. "Oh, these fêtes!" he announced to the room at large. "You wouldn't think everyone could get het up over why the garden-produce stall is where the fancy woollens was promised it should be. Where's Amy Folliat? She can deal with these people . . . about the only person who can."

"She went upstairs with Hattie." Miss Brewis jumped up. "I'll fetch her for you, Sir George."

"Thank you, Amanda."

Miss Brewis went out of the room.

"Must get hold of some more wire fencing," murmured Sir George.

"For the fête?" Mrs. Legge asked.

"No, no. To put up where we adjoin Hoodown Park in the woods. The old stuff's rotted away, and that's where they get through."

"Who get through?"

"Trespassers!" ejaculated Sir George. "They're a menace since they've started this youth hostel tomfoolery. They come out at you from everywhere wearing the most incredible shirts . . . boy this morning had one all covered with crawling turtles and things; made me think I'd been hitting the bottle or something. Half of them can't speak English . . . just gibber at you."

He mimicked: "'Oh plees . . . yes haf you . . . tell me . . . iss way to ferry?' Half of them Communists, I shouldn't wonder," he ended darkly.

"Come now, George, don't get started on Communists," said Mrs. Legge. She led him out of the window and called over her shoulder: "Come on Alec . . . and you, Jim."

"Not just now," Warburton said. "Mrs. Oliver and I want to put Monsieur Poirot in the picture about the Murder Hunt."

"Yes, you must come and see the clues and things for the Murder Hunt, Monsieur Poirot," said Mrs. Oliver.

Poirot rose and followed them obediently. The three of them went across the hall and into a small room furnished plainly as a business office.

"Lethal weapons to your left," observed Captain Warburton, waving his hand towards a small, baize-covered card table. On it were laid out a small pistol, a piece of lead piping with a sinister stain on it, a blue bottle labelled "poison," a length of clothes line and a hypodermic syringe.

"Those are the weapons," explained Mrs. Oliver, "and these are the suspects." She handed him a card on which the fictitious cast of the murder mystery was printed.

"Everyone who enters gets one of those," explained Captain Warburton rapidly. "Also a notebook and pencil for copying clues. There will be six clues. You go on from one to the other like a treasure hunt, and the weapons are concealed in suspicious places. Here's the first clue. A snapshot."

Poirot took the small print from him and studied it with a frown. Then he turned it upside down.

Warburton laughed. "Ingenious bit of trick photography, isn't it?" he said complacently. "Quite simple, once you know what it is."

Poirot, who did not know what it was, felt a mounting annoyance. "Some kind of a barred window?" he suggested.

"Looks a bit like it, I admit. No, it's a section of a tennis net."

"Ah!" Poirot looked again at the snapshot. "Yes—it is as you say—quite obvious when you have been told what it is."

"The second clue will be found in a box under the centre of the tennis net. In the box are this empty poison bottle here, and a loose cork."

"Only, you see," said Mrs. Oliver rapidly, "it's a screw-topped bottle, so the *cork* is really the clue."

"I know, madame, that you are always full of ingenuity, but I do not quite see——"

Mrs. Oliver interrupted him. "Oh, but of course," she said, "there's a story. Like in a magazine serial—a synopsis." She turned to Captain Warburton. "Have you got the leaflets?"

"They've not arrived yet." He glanced at his wrist watch. "I'd better be off to the printers to collect them."

As he left the room, the pleasant mild face of Miss Brewis appeared round the door. "Oh, there you are, Monsieur Poirot. I've been looking for you to show you your room."

She led him up the staircase and along a passage to a big, airy room looking out over the river. "There is a bathroom just opposite. I hope you'll find everything comfortable."

"Yes, indeed!" Poirot swept an appreciative eye over the small bookstand, the reading lamp and the box labelled "Biscuits" by the bedside. "You seem, in this house, to have everything organized to perfection. Am I to congratulate you, or my charming hostess?"

"Lady Stubbs's time is fully taken up in being charming," said Miss Brewis, a slightly acid note in her voice.

"A very decorative young woman," mused Poirot.

"As you say."

"But in other respects is she not, perhaps. . . ." he broke off. "*Pardon*. I am indiscreet. I comment on something I ought not, perhaps, to mention."

Miss Brewis gave him a steady look. She said dryly: "Lady Stubbs knows exactly what she is doing. Besides being, as you said, a very decorative young woman, she is also a very shrewd one."

SHE had turned away and left the room before Poirot's eyebrows had fully risen in surprise. So that was what the efficient Miss Brewis thought, was it? Or had she merely said so for some reason of her own?

He frowned perplexedly. Then he strolled over to the window and stood looking out. As he did so, he saw Lady Stubbs come out of the house with Mrs. Folliat. They stood for a moment or two talking by the big magnolia tree. Then Mrs. Folliat nodded goodbye, picked up her gardening basket and gloves and trotted off down the drive.

Lady Stubbs stood watching her for a moment, then absent-mindedly pulled off a magnolia flower, smelled it and began slowly to walk down the path that led through the trees to the river. She looked just once over her shoulder before she disappeared from sight.

From behind the magnolia tree Michael Weyman came quietly into view, paused a moment irresolutely and then followed the tall, slim figure down into the trees.

A good-looking and dynamic young man, Poirot thought. With a more attractive personality, no doubt, than that of Sir George Stubbs. . . .

After a moment's reflection Poirot hurried out of his room and down the stairs. He slipped out of a conveniently adjacent side door and set off at top speed down a back drive, which his sense of locality enabled him to predict would at some point join the front drive.

His manoeuvre was successful and enabled him, panting very slightly, to come up beside Mrs. Folliat and relieve her in a gallant manner of her gardening basket.

"You permit, madame?"

"Oh, thank you, Monsieur Poirot, that's very kind of you. But it's not heavy."

"Allow me to carry it for you to your home. You live near here?"

"I actually live in the lodge by the

LEAVES FROM

Starke's

HOLIDAY GUIDE BOOK

"When abroad, driving on the right will present few difficulties for the motorist."

IN JOHN BULL NEXT WEEK

The wild one

by NORAH BURKE

They were pushing the railway through the wilderness, but the Lord of the Wild fought back. This was a battle to the death . . .

front gate. Sir George very kindly rents it to me."

The lodge by the front gate of her former home. . . . How did she really feel about that, Poirot wondered. He changed the subject by observing: "Lady Stubbs is much younger than her husband, is she not?"

"Twenty-three years younger."

"Physically she is very attractive."

Mrs. Folliat said quietly. "Hattie is a dear good child." She went on: "I know her very well, you see. For a short time she was under my care."

"I did not know that."

"It is a sad story. Her people had estates, sugar estates, in the West Indies. As a result of an earthquake, the house there was burned down and her parents and brothers and sisters all lost their lives. Hattie herself was at a convent in Paris and was thus suddenly left without any near relatives. It was considered advisable by the executors that Hattie should be chaperoned and introduced into society after she had spent a certain time abroad. I accepted the charge of her.

"It suited me very well—I was going through a difficult time. My husband had died just before the outbreak of war. My eldest son, who was in the navy, went down with his ship; my youngest son, who had been out in Kenya, came back, joined the Commandos and was killed in Italy. That meant three lots of death duties and this house had to be put up for sale.

"I myself was very badly off, and I was glad of the distraction of having someone young to look after and travel about with. I became very fond of Hattie, all the more so, perhaps, because I soon realized that she was—shall we say, not fully capable of fending for herself.

"Understand me, Monsieur Poirot. Hattie is not mentally deficient, but she is what country folk describe as 'simple.' I think myself that it was a blessing that there was practically no money. If she had been an heiress her position might have been one of much greater difficulty.

"She was attractive to men and, being of an affectionate nature, was easily attracted and influenced—she had definitely to be looked after. When, after the final winding up of her parents' estate, it was discovered that the plantation was destroyed and there were more debts than assets, I could only be thankful that a man such as Sir George Stubbs had fallen in love with her and wanted to marry her."

"Possibly—yes—it was a solution."

"Sir George," said Mrs. Folliat, "though he is a self-made man, is kindly and fundamentally decent, besides being extremely wealthy. And Hattie is everything he wants. She displays clothes and jewels to perfection, is affectionate and willing, and is completely happy with him. I confess that I am very thankful that that is so, for I admit that I deliberately influenced her to accept him. If it had turned out badly—" her voice faltered "—it would have been my fault for urging her to marry a man so many years older than herself."

"It seems to me," said Poirot approvingly, "that you made there a most prudent arrangement for her."

They were standing now by the front gate. The lodge, a small white one-storeyed building, lay a little back from the drive.

Mrs. Folliat took back her basket from Poirot with a word of thanks.

"I was always very fond of the lodge," she said, looking at it affectionately. "Merdle, our head gardener for thirty years, used to live here." She sighed. "There is hardly a person left now on the estate from the old days—all new faces."

"I am glad, madame," said Poirot, "that you at least have found a haven."

Mrs. Folliat sighed again. "It's a very wicked world, Monsieur Poirot. And there are very wicked people in the world. You probably know that as well as I do. I don't say so before the younger people; it might discourage them, but it's true. . . . Yes, it's a very wicked world. . . ."

She gave him a little nod, then turned and went into the lodge. Poirot stood staring at the shut door.

Then, in a mood of exploration, he went through the front gates and down the steeply twisting road that presently emerged on a small quay. A large bell with a chain had a notice upon it: "Ring for the Ferry." A very old man with rheumy eyes, who had been leaning against a bollard, came shuffling towards Poirot.

"Du ee want the ferry, sir?"

"I thank you, no. I have just come down from Nasse House for a little walk."

"Ah, 'tis up at Nasse yu are? Worked there as a boy I did, and my son, he were head gardener there, but I did use to look after the boats. Old Squire Folliat, he was fair mazed about boats. Sail in all weathers, he would.

"The major now, his son, he didn't care for sailing. Horses, that's all he cared about. And a pretty packet went on 'em. That and the bottle—had a hard time with him, his wife did. Yu've seen her, maybe—lives at the lodge now, she du."

"Yes, I have just left her there now."

"Her be a Folliat, tu, second cousin from over Tiverton way. A great one for the garden, she is, all them there flowering shrubs she had put in. Even when it was took over during the war, she still looked after they shrubs."

"It was hard on her, both her sons being killed."

"Ah, she've had a hard life, she have, what with this and that. Trouble with her husband, and trouble with the young gentleman, tu. Not Mr. Henry. He was as nice a young gentleman as yu could wish, took after his grandfather, fond of sailing and went into the navy as a matter of course, but Mr. James, he caused her a lot of trouble. Debts and women it were, and then, tu, he were real wild in his temper. Born one of they as can't go straight. But the war suited him, as yu might say—give him his chance. Ah! There's many who can't go straight in peace who dies bravely in war."

"So now," said Poirot, "there are no more Folliats at Nasse."

The old man's flow of talk died away abruptly. "Just as yu say, sir."

Poirot looked curiously at the old man. "Instead you have Sir George Stubbs. What is thought locally of him?"

"Us understands," said the old man, "that he be powerful rich." His tone sounded dry and almost amused.

"And his wife?"

"Ah, she's a fine lady from London, she is. No use for gardens, not her. They du say, tu, as her du be wanting up here." He tapped his temple significantly. "Not as her isn't always very nice spoken and friendly. Just over a year they've been here. Bought the place and had it all done up like new.

"I remember as though 'twere yesterday them arriving. Arrived in the evening, they did, day after the worst gale as I ever remember. Trees down right and left—one down across the drive and us had to get it sawn away in a hurry to get the drive clear for the car. And the big oak up along, that come down and brought a lot of others down with it, made a rare mess, it did."

"Ah, yes—where the Folly stands now?"

The old man turned aside and spat disgustedly. "Folly 'tis called and Folly 'tis — new-fangled nonsense. Never was no Folly in the old Folliats' time. Her ladyship's idea, that Folly was. Put up not three weeks after she first come, and I've no doubt she talked Sir George into it. Rare silly it looks stuck up there among trees, like a heathen temple."

Poirot smiled faintly. "The London ladies," he said, "they must have their fancies. It is sad that the day of the Folliats is over."

"Don't ee never believe that, sir," the old man gave a wheezy chuckle. "Always be Folliats at Nasse."

"But the house belongs to Sir George Stubbs."

"That's as may be—but there's still a Folliat here. Ah—rare and cunning the Folliats are."

"What do you mean?"

The old man gave him a sly sideways glance. "Mrs. Folliat be living up tu Lodge, bain't she?"

"Yes," said Poirot slowly. "Mrs. Folliat is living at the Lodge and the world is very wicked and all the people in it are very wicked."

The old man stared at him. "Ah," he said. "Yu've got something there, maybe." And he shuffled away again.

"But what have I got?" Poirot asked himself with irritation as he slowly walked up the hill back to the house.

To be continued next week

"Dead Man's Folly," by Agatha Christie, will be published as a book by Collins on November 5

KNOWLEDGE—3

Man's business here is to know for the sake of living, not to live for the sake of knowing.

Frederic Harrison

"Stanley! Have you been mending the washing-up machine again?"

Fathom of pearls

Continued from page 15

over the side. They were removing his helmet when Selkirk surfaced and caught hold of the ladder. Behind the glass faceplate, he stared up at me.

Cobber was sweating. He removed the sodden towel from around his neck and chewed vigorously on the aspirins I handed him. Then he nodded, and the natives lifted Selkirk aboard. The fat man was chalky in the face, and shivering.

While he was being skinned out of his suit, Cobber barked an order to the Kanakas.

"What did you tell them?" Selkirk demanded.

Cobber turned to stare at him. "That you were a damned fool to take twenty fathoms when you didn't know diving," he said. "To put you in the decompression tub before the bends hit you."

Selkirk grimaced and stared at his stomach. He went below with the native boys around him.

I flipped the switch on the compressor and looked at Cobber. There was a whitish fringe on his lips where he had gobbed the aspirins.

"She's down there, all right," he said. "Snarled in heavy kelp, in a gorge. Current's strong." He was massaging his stomach muscles as he talked. "We may have to put a line on her and winch her up to the sea floor."

"What's the matter with this jackaroo Selkirk?" I asked. "He seems to think I was trying to scrag him when the sharks went by."

Cobber continued to knead his stomach muscles. When I put a lighted cigarette between his lips he sucked on it gratefully. "The man's a thief," he said calmly. "I knew that before we left Broome. He may have blown the Billow Queen himself, and he intends to fix our wagon, once we locate the pearls. This was the only way I could locate the ship and learn the truth. Let's watch him."

Then, having brought me up to date, he lay down on the deck and pulled some sacks over his naked body. In a few minutes, he was asleep.

I WENT below and found Selkirk still in the decompression chamber. He was lounging like a small white whale, with his eyes closed. Going back up to the wheelhouse, I headed the lugger toward Weitoa Isle for a night anchorage. The weather had not reached us, but the whitecaps were kicking up a little higher.

The next morning, we were back over the sunken Billow Queen at dawn. When Cobber and Selkirk were in their suits, I gave them a scalding cup of coffee while the Kanakas waited with the heavy metal helmets. There was an early mist rising off the slaty water.

"It would be safer to drag her out of that gorge," said Cobber.

"Maybe we can get inside, this trip," suggested Selkirk.

"Possible," Cobber nodded. "But if you get a squirt of black stuff, mister, tuck your arms in close. Don't move. That will mean octopuses have settled in the hull. If you don't excite them, they may give you a love pat and move on. If you try to get away, they will hole your suit with their beaks and the pressure will mash you good."

He handed me his cup, and the Kanaka boys screwed his cumbersome helmet on. They then did the same thing for Selkirk. Waddling clumsily, the men went down the steps, and we passed their lines overboard.

The compressor was chugging away. While I waited, the Kanakas gathered on the stern and sang their tuneless chants. It was nearly three hours later before the telephone line to Cobber's suit came alive.

"Sharp now!" he growled. "We got the pearls."

I waited, listening to the water slop around below. "Did you hear me?" he asked sharply.

"Yes."

"Big ones, I think. I'm giving them to Selkirk."

"But you said——"

"I've got something else to bring

up," explained Cobber. "Hoist Selkirk fast enough to give him a slight touch of the horribles. Bend him, but not too much. You understand?"

"Yes." I watched his rope, and when it twitched twice I started hauling Selkirk up. We brought him topsides with a rush, and his hands were blue and shrivelled from direct water exposure. Watching him shake as he came out of the suit, I figured we had timed it about right. The liquefied nitrogen in his blood would turn gaseous, and bubbles would begin to form along his spine and in the blood stream. He would be in agony until the decompression chamber brought him around.

When the native boys had carried him below, I lowered a weighted hand line to Cobber. He acknowledged receipt of it by a single twitch, and then I waited while he prowled below in the wreckage. When he signalled, I worked him to the surface slowly. He seemed a lot heavier, and when he finally broke the surface there was a long burden in his arms.

"Don't call the boys," he said, over the phone line, although we were only a few feet apart.

"Secure a line and drop the free end down to me through a scupper."

I put the line through and watched him lash something to the side, half-way between midships and stern. Finally he moved back to the ladder, like a clumsy automaton, and I pulled him on deck.

When his helmet was off he took a cigarette from me and stared at me gloomily, dark-smudged under the eyes. The Kanakas came on deck and began to chatter, and he answered them, but his eyes were sweeping back and forth over the sea.

"The sharks are back," I said. "They made a run just after you got on board."

"Oh?" He nodded glumly, and turned to stare at the two fins cleaving the water smoothly alongside the Kookaburra. "We'd better head for Cooktown," he said, and then he walked to the hatch and went quietly below.

I started the engine and put our helm toward Cooktown. Cobber came up behind me and stood there, smoking quietly. Once he cursed, and I turned to see that his nose was bleeding. As he went below, I realized that he was as tight and nervous as I had ever seen him.

The weather chased us for several hours, but by ten that night it had blown out. I turned the wheel over to one of the Kanakas and went down to the galley. Selkirk, in a pair of dirty duck pants, was drinking gin. Cobber was smoking a cigarette and watching him.

The coffee tasted wonderful; I was burning my mouth on it when Cobber spoke.

"Let's look at the stones now, mister," he said.

Selkirk nodded, took the oilskin packet from his pocket and tossed it casually on to the table. Scott untied the strings deftly and spilled the pearls out on a tin plate. There were eleven of them.

GLEESON had done a good job of skinning them down, although two or three layers still remained before their true value could be determined. My pulse was beating rapidly and I knew they were not fisheyes. They were dull grey nacre ovals, and some of them might be top pearls.

It was quiet in the galley. The lugger pitched to the waves, and the deck gear rattled, but it was quiet in the galley.

"You were right," Cobber said softly. "Maybe thirty thousand pounds' worth, if they skin good." He rolled the largest one with a forefinger. It was about the size of a linnet's egg, gleaming under its dull coat. "This one won't go flaky or spotty. It would pay for a boat like this one. A queen could wear it in her crown."

Selkirk seemed to be having trouble breathing. His eyes shifted in their fat pouches as Cobber's finger rolled the big pearl. He brought the gin bottle up, took a drink and lowered it without removing his gaze from the tin plate.

"How long before we reach port?" he asked in a thick voice.

"Day after tomorrow," said Cobber. He scooped the pearls back into the oilskin, secured the laces, and tossed the pouch back to Selkirk. "It was a good day's work," he continued. "It's the first luck I've had in a long time."

Selkirk nodded. His face was flushed and his eyes were bright. Cobber went above to take over the wheel, and I poured another cup of coffee. Selkirk sat silent, nipping at the gin bottle. . . .

Something hard was pressing against the back of my head. I shifted in my sleep and fumbled, thinking it was something that had fallen into the berth while I slept. My fingers touched cold metal, and I came awake with a rush. Selkirk was standing beside my bunk, holding a pistol against my head.

"Get up," the fat man said. "Don't get any ideas or turn brave. Just get up."

His face was set. I climbed out of the bunk, and he trussed my arms swiftly with a rope. He did it expertly, throwing the hitches on with one hand and holding the pistol with the other.

"On deck!" he said, whirling me around by the shoulder and prodding me in the back with the muzzle. He didn't seem tense or drunk; just businesslike. As I went up the ladder, he steadied me.

Something was wrong; I could hear it. There was a sound of waves breaking. When I was on deck I saw that the Kookaburra was only a few hundred yards from reefs, and heading directly into them. I glanced around at Selkirk, startled, but he prodded me with the pistol again.

"Forward," he said, and I walked through the wheelhouse. He told me to sit down on the hatch, and then he trussed my legs securely. The Kanaka boys were not in sight, and neither was Cobber.

I lay on the hatch, lashed tightly, and the spray from the bow blew over me.

The sound of the creaming surf was loud now, and I heard the sound of running feet, aft. Cobber came lunging to the wheel and put it hard around. Selkirk fired a single shot and Cobber snarled back.

"Put her back as she was going, mister," Selkirk said calmly.

Slowly, not turning, Cobber let the helm go back round. The shallow water boiling over the reefs was very near now, reeling in towards us. "Where are the boys?" Cobber asked hoarsely.

"I set them adrift last night, in the dinghy," answered Selkirk. "The biggest one tried to jump me, and I killed him. It could happen to you right now, so steer this tub where I tell you."

Cobber didn't answer; he was poised on his toes, and I prayed he wouldn't make the break. I knew that if he did, Selkirk would drop him. Our course was putting us on the reef; we were making about eight knots, and the incoming tide was strong.

"If we don't get extra power," Cobber said pleadingly, "she'll capsize in the breakers. How about letting me go below long enough to adjust the fuel feed?"

Selkirk waved the pistol slightly, but did not reply.

"Damn it, take the pearls," shouted Cobber, "but the ship is all I have left. Give me a chance to bring her out whole."

"All right." Selkirk nodded. "But if you try anything out of line, I'll kill you both."

Cobber went below. In a few seconds he came back, shouting in advance of his arrival.

The swell had caught us now, and Cobber yanked the fuel lever open wide. The lugger reacted to it, but sluggishly. The boil across the reef was almost under our bow, and beyond it the surf was thumping against the hard sand. Selkirk was nervous, but his pistol stayed on Cobber.

"Keep her steady as she goes," he warned. "I won't back off."

The prow reared, and the reef chewed at the Kookaburra's hull. The engine coughed, missed and roared, but we were caught hard, in a vice. The lugger hung at an odd altitude, and I rolled back against the bulkhead. There was a metallic scraping, and the engine quit. The lugger was impaled on the reef.

Selkirk had been thrown back with me by the impact. He staggered free and grabbed a coil of halyard from the deck. Swiftly, cursing, he forced Cobber to his knees and bound him to me. Then he was gone. We heard a splash as he dropped off the bow.

"Let's get up at the same time," ordered Cobber, and, like a four-legged turtle, we heaved erect. Staggering up to the slanting rail, we saw Selkirk swimming toward the shore. The water of the lagoon was blue, and not deep, and the shore was fringed with palms.

Selkirk was not far from the shore when the two fins broke water behind him. They went at him smoothly and silently, and we saw them roll in the shoal water as they struck. He screamed, a bawling shriek that startled birds out of the palm trees and echoed over the lagoon. Then the scream muted down to agony as the huge sharks slashed at him methodically. The water was stained with blood, and the last we saw of him was a hand clawing over the sea.

"The knots are wet," said Cobber, after all the thrashing was over. "Don't jerk them, or they'll get tighter."

After an hour of patient shifting and testing, we were free. Then, while we were wading in the lagoon, I kept a knife in one hand. But we found the oilskin packet, in a scrap of Selkirk's tattered clothes.

When we were back on board the Kookaburra, Cobber reached over the side and pulled up the remnants of the shredded tarpaulin.

"It's Gleeson," he said, "or what's left of him. I found his body in the Billow Queen, and he had been knifed. So I used him for bait and the blue-fins passed the judgment."

"You cut it pretty fine," I answered angrily. "You nearly got me shot."

"A mistake," he admitted. "I dozed off. Now if we can close that sea cock, I think the tide will take us off. If she's not holed too badly, we'll go back and look for the boys."

The bow was partially stove in but she was not taking too much water. While we were at the bilge pumps, I had a few nips out of the gin bottle, remembering that ghastly flurry in the lagoon.

Cobber was grunting and sweating, and when we had her nearly pumped out, the breakers worked us free. I asked him for another look at the pearls that had caused all the trouble, but he only shook his head.

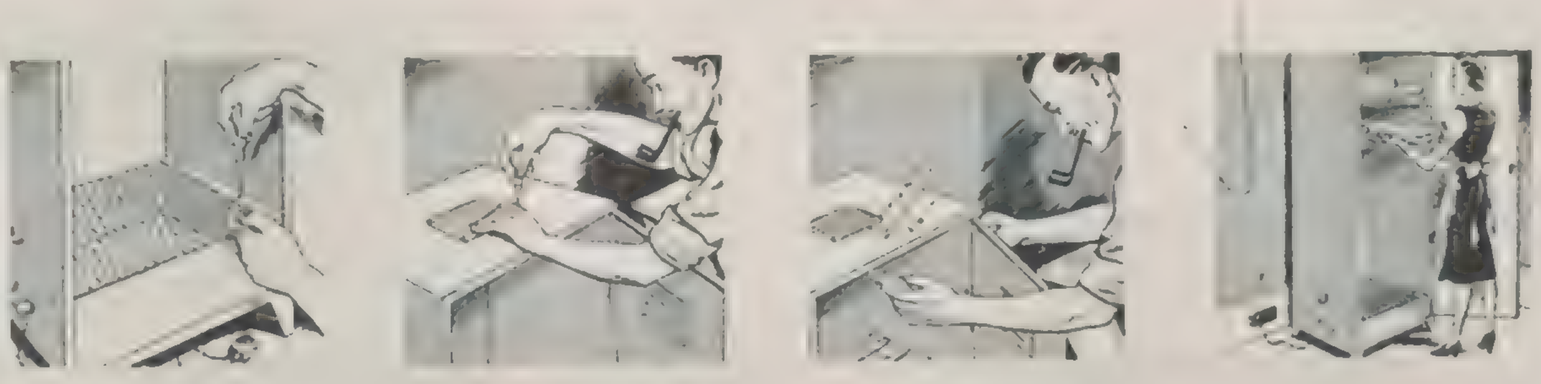
"Not a chance," he said briskly. "You might get ideas, and then I'd have to dream up a sticky wicket for you, too. Better just go ahead and look for the boys, and run our usual tight ship."

That seemed a flippant way to cover the whole affair, but I had another slug of the gin and went on pumping away.

While I sweated, the pair of blue-fin sharks rolled by our bow, as if in salute, and went smoothly out toward the open sea. THE END

Make yourself at home

All over Britain householders are finding ingenious ways of brightening and easing their home lives. Each week, JOHN BULL will pay five guineas for the best original and practical do-it-yourself hint sent in by a reader. These will be illustrated by Stanley Herbert. Send your hints to: "Make Yourself At Home," JOHN BULL, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1



AFTER several wet washdays I made my wife a clothes drying cupboard from a second-hand steel cabinet. Into the bottom of the cabinet I fixed a safe electric "black-heat" element—not an ordinary boiling ring. Above it, for extra safety, I fitted an expanded metal screen. Louvre vents in the door and roof allow for a draught of air. On the outside of the cabinet I mounted a neon bulb which indicates when the power is on.—*G. P. Jones, Schoolboy Lane, Norton, Doncaster.*

KNOWLEDGE—4

To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge.

Benjamin Disraeli

Chew

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EP46/56

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BEST OF ALL – BUY AN ALL-WOOL CARPET

Gluckstein of the Guards

Continued from page 20

dangerous rebel general, "the Leopard," is at large with his army, after demolishing the forts beyond the river and putting every defender to the sword.

The whole district is cowed. The people are barricaded in their huts. Preparations are reaching fever-pitch. The Royal Air Force has dropped supplies, and my men are drilling constantly to attain the last ounce of fitness. Their marksmanship has to be seen to be believed.

I have had a visit from the commander-in-chief. He said: "To you falls the honour of marching against the most cunning and courageous of all the rebel generals, the great Leopard. On the outcome turns the success or failure of the whole campaign. I trust in you." He added, as I know already, that the Leopard sticks at nothing, and bears a charmed life.

So if this should be my last letter, darling Lise, you will know that I have died a soldier's death, with your name on my lips. If fortune favours me, I shall merit promotion as well as honour, and shall return to claim you as my own.

He signed this letter with a bold waggle of the pen, addressed the envelope and put it in his pocket. Then he reversed the photograph and dealt with his official mail, which, when completed, he slipped neatly into a rubber band and placed in a canvas bag, to be sent down to Tetu next morning.

The following day Gluckstein was out early with his rifle, his camera and the dog Taffy at his heels. A small escort helped him to search for nests of the Kikuyu Ashy Flycatcher, of which he was anxious to secure a set of photographs.

When they halted for mid-day sandwiches, the guards built a fire to brew tea and were not surprised—since the actions of Europeans were always unpredictable—to see Gluckstein take a letter from his pocket and push it into the fire. He watched the edges curl, blacken and then burst into flames with a smile on his lips and a queer expression on his face, half of sadness, half of pleasure.

They walked all day and questioned many people, but no one had heard anything of Chui.

Gluckstein found three nests, one with eggs in it, which he was able to photograph. He arrived back at Fort Hanna tired and dusty, with Taffy panting faithfully behind him, in time for the solemn evening ceremony of running down the flag.

This was performed punctiliously half an hour after sunset. A bugle call rang mournfully, plaintively, over the darkening hills; down came the flag, drooping as a rule, for the wind fell with dusk. Gluckstein clicked his heels, arched his back and stood rigidly at the salute.

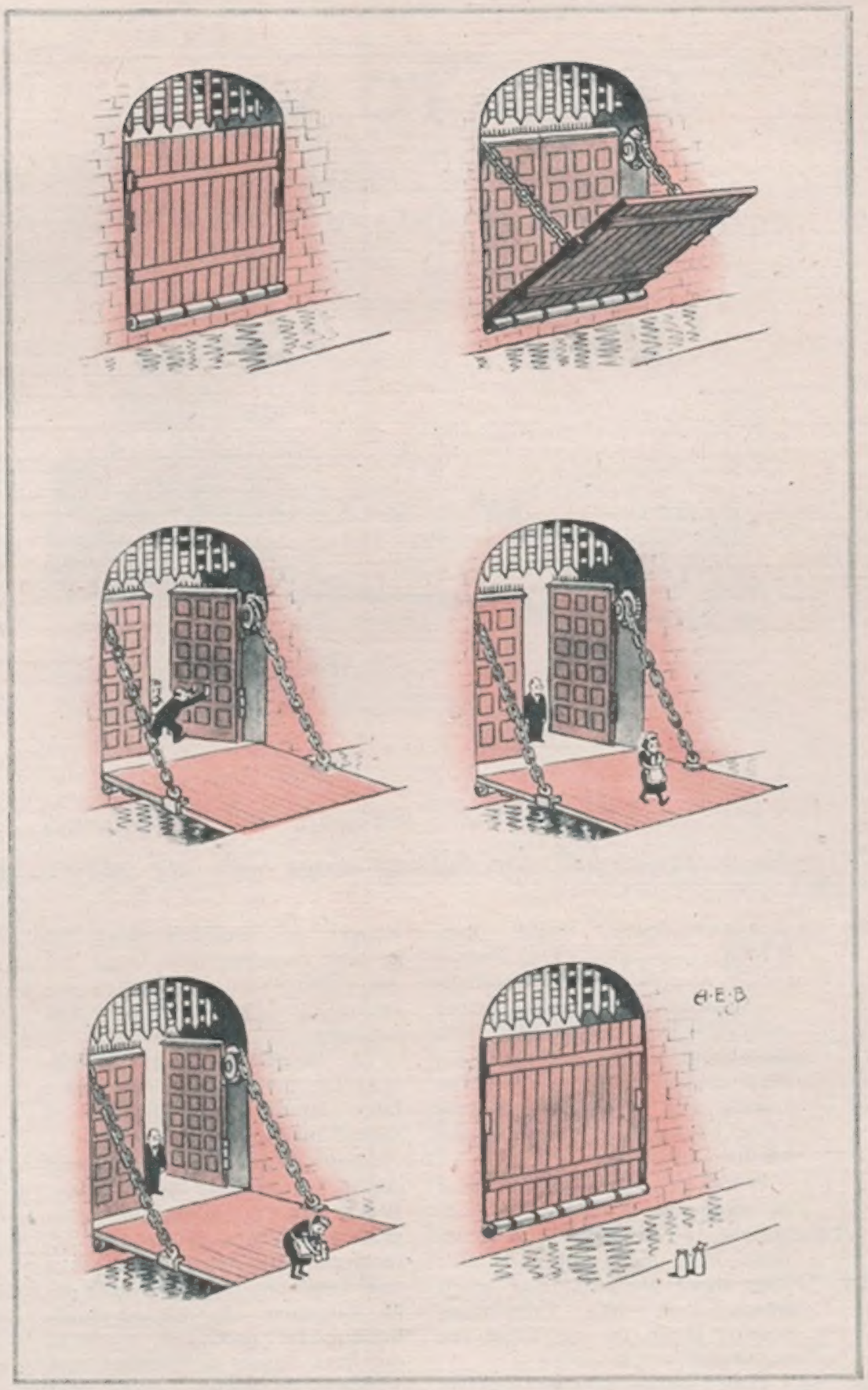
Something in his heart died each evening at the dying of the day, and he looked up at the stark, slim flagpole as if at the touch of death on his shoulder.

The sergeant's voice barking out words of dismissal broke the recurring spell. The men marched off at ease and soon their laughter could be heard as they sat round fires on which their evening stews simmered.

Night now engulfed the ridges. Firelight streamed with winter gaiety from open doorways. Guards pulled up the drawbridge with ropes which they fastened to stakes. The fort was now impregnable until morning.

Gluckstein walked slowly round the perimeter, to see to his moat. A young moon stood above the rearing watch-tower, silvering the vicious tip of every stake. The moat was like a huge gaping mouth crammed with sharp teeth, each one ivory pointed.

It looked a veritable forest of whittled stakes, but Gluckstein knew a secret no one else shared. There was a way through this tooth-crammed mouth. To make it, he had cut out some of the stakes, although when you gazed down at them—they lay ten feet



below ground level—you could see no gaps.

A small man, he could wiggle and slither through almost anything. He would lower himself on a rope made of twisted creepers and worm his way from side to side until he reached a certain foothold, under a clump of bushes on the far bank.

It was a tricky business, and one he did not often attempt, for the risks were considerable. But the knowledge that he could do so if he wanted gave him the illusion of freedom. He suffered, indeed, from a form of claustrophobia, which fort life had aggravated.

His inspection over, Gluckstein entered his own quarters to find his hip-bath prepared by Joseph in the centre of the bedroom. A bath towel and a cake of soap lay neatly beside it; on the bed were clean underwear, a freshly pressed shirt, a flannel suit well-made by his father's Indian tailors.

Cleansed and tidy, he sat down with shoulders squared to a solitary meal served by Joseph in his *kanzu*, sash and fez. Taffy snored by the fire.

This evening, a note came in with the soup. It was a grubby note that must have passed from hand to hand, and it was brief. "Please come, I have something to say to you." It was signed: "George Kimotho."

"How did this get here?" Gluckstein asked.

"Someone left it at the gate before sundown," Joseph answered.

"Then I should have had it sooner," Gluckstein said, wondering why Joseph had withheld it.

Then, gradually, he became aware that Joseph had something on his mind. The houseboy fidgeted, set down a dish clumsily, seemed about to speak and then to think better of it.

At last he blurted rather than spoke: "Bwana you will not go out tonight?"

"Why should I go?"

"The man who brought the note said it was to summon you."

"Why should I not go, then?" Gluckstein asked.

"It would be dangerous."

"Very well, then," Gluckstein said, "I will go tomorrow." He threw the note into the flames. "It's not a matter of importance, anyway."

"That is good," Joseph said approvingly. "Only leopards walk about at night."

He brought a cracked kitchen cup full of black coffee, and Gluckstein stirred it thoughtfully. Why was Joseph so anxious for him to stay at home tonight? He could think of only one answer.

After dinner he climbed the lookout tower, where a sentry stood night and day. The stars were hard and brilliant overhead, and below them ridge after ridge of the forest country tumbled away beneath him towards the distant and invisible plain. Few lights were to be seen, but here and there one sprang up, lived for a few moments and then died, as if appalled at its own temerity. A man walking with a lantern, a cycle on the road?

Far, far below, a cluster of lights winked steadily, like small, fallen stars. This was part of Tetu, which spelled civilization; the club, the shops, hotels, offices, police.

Gluckstein knew that, down in Tetu, watchers' eyes never left the sky. In each fort, guard-post and chief's village a simple rocket-launching apparatus stood ready. At any minute some distant part of the horizon might explode into frenzied light, a cascade of sparks might flare across the sky. Then a great ringing of telephones and revving up of engines would be followed by a rush of jeeps up the battle-roads, and help would be on the spot within the hour. After three years of trial and error, it was all very well organized.

Joseph watched his master descend the ladder, puffing at a small cheroot, enter his room and shut the door. He heard him speak affectionately to the dog Taffy and draw his chair up to the fire. He reckoned on two hours before his bwana emerged for a stroll.

The sentry on duty by the gate, an ally, helped him to let the drawbridge gently down. The sergeant and his friends were indoors, playing cards. Joseph ran quickly across the bridge and into the darkness. . . .

Below, in Tetu, Gluckstein's name was being mentioned with a mixture of contempt, surprise and doubt. Contempt, because he was foreign and of low origin; surprise at his competence; doubt, because he was so unpredictable.

Morna Cavendish felt this strongly. She was used to young officers who succumbed at once to the combination of her own charm and her husband's authority. Gluckstein did all the right things, but did them differently. He was a foreigner.

They were alone tonight, for once, in dressing-gowns, eating scrambled eggs with anchovies on trays by the fire and looking at illustrated magazines.

"Am I a snob, darling?" Morna asked, frowning at this unpleasant thought.

"Not a bit!" Cavendish said.

"It isn't that I mind in the least about Gluckstein's father. It's the other way round."

"Mm."

"I mean, it's to his credit that his father's a refugee draper. But it's so odd of him. And then that woman's photograph . . . nothing fits in."

"Oh, well, it takes all sorts," Cavendish muttered cheerfully. "What little Solly's got to do is to catch the big, bad General Chui."

"Do you think he will?"

"Not really. It's Chui's home ground. And then he——"

The telephone rang. Cavendish picked it up and said: "Oh?" twice, and "Where?" and "All right." Morna was surprised to see him scramble from his chair and run on to the veranda.

"Rockets," he said. "We've missed them. Up near the forest. Fort Hanna, probably."

"Just when we were talking——"

"I shall go up with the police. Fill me a Thermos, there's a dear, while I get my things."

It was a nerve-searing drive. Two jeeps and a lorry swayed round corners, screamed up hills, bumped downhill, over bridges. Their drivers made the most of a brief freedom from safety rules constantly dinned into them. They put down large, heavy feet and went.

The track unrolled like a thread off a spool. Each vehicle was a hedgehog with guns sticking out at all angles. It was a miracle none of them went off.

The cavalcade screeched to a stop outside Fort Hanna. The place was all astir like a disturbed ant-heap. The sergeant came running out.

"Where's bwana Gluckstein?" Cavendish demanded.

"Gone!"

"What do you mean, gone?"

The sergeant gestured in bewilderment. "No one has seen him."

Such was the confusion, it took

KNOWLEDGE—5

Knowledge without conscience, is but the ruin of the soul.

François Rabelais

Cavendish several hours to sort out the truth, or as much of the truth as he could uncover.

The fort had been attacked surprised, overwhelmed and plundered. Fifteen service rifles had gone, and a lot of ammunition.

This was the worst disaster Cavendish could remember.

A single modern weapon might kill a hundred men, and its capture had the effect on the terrorists' morale of a major victory.

Human casualties were light—four men wounded, none killed, and no dead terrorists. A disgrace, as well as a disaster.

"Inside job," said the police inspector. "These blokes put up no fight. And they'd let down the drawbridge."

Cavendish agreed sourly. This was a deep humiliation, a blot of enormous size and blackness on his copybook. As for Gluckstein!

He cursed Gluckstein venomously for fifteen minutes. But of course it was his own fault. He should have resigned rather than allow the yellow-livered little basket to be given charge of a fort; that cheating, sneaking, swollen-headed little rat, bogus to the bottom of his false heart, strutting about like a stage *pukka sahib* and then clearing out at the first whiff of danger.

Meanwhile, where *was* Gluckstein? He had vanished totally. The raiders had burst into his quarters and smashed up everything in sight. Cavendish observed with satisfaction that Gluckstein's luscious blonde lay face-downwards on the floor amid splintered glass. He kicked the frame savagely to one side and bent over a fox-brown body lying in its own blood, decapitated.

"Poor Taffy," he said. "You deserved a better master."

"Chui's work," said the policeman. "With fifteen rifles and that pile of ammo he'll have the whole district at his mercy. We're back where we were a year ago."

Cavendish grunted. His disgust was such that he actually felt sick.

"I wouldn't have believed it," the policeman added. "If he was as scared as that, you'd think he'd have applied for a transfer. Plenty of jobs for pen-pushers these days."

"Not for him," Cavendish said bitterly. "The gallant outpost-holder, that was his line. The lone empire-builder. He'll turn up, I suppose, in a few hours, with some cock-and-bull story."

But he didn't. Not only did he fail to appear that night, but the day after brought no news of him, nor the day after that.

Gluckstein's whereabouts became a major topic. High-ups from Nairobi constantly telephoned about it, patrols went out, newspapers got hold of the story. It was feared that General Chui's gang had captured him to hold him as a hostage; if they did not use him as a sacrifice. . . .

ON the third day his father turned up in Tetu in a sorry state, almost wringing his hands, and asking why the government was taking no immediate action.

Wearily Cavendish explained what action was, in fact, being taken, so far fruitlessly.

"My son has not run away," Gluckstein senior said.

"He's given an uncommonly good imitation of it."

"No. He wished too much to resemble an Englishman."

"We have all sorts," Cavendish said. "Perhaps he chose the wrong model."

"There is a reason," his father said obstinately. He was not unlike his son, only bald, darker-skinned and more stooping, and with a stronger accent. He was distracted with worry, but had a certain dignity in his distress.

"You'd better take his things," Cavendish said. "They won't be wanted again at Fort Hanna."

Everything had gone into a suitcase and a parcel, except the big photograph in its now battered silver frame. Gluckstein senior took it up and looked at it with a sad, curled smile that reminded Cavendish of the son.

"My poor boy," he said. "He has such great dreams. They are too big for a head that has no resting-place."

"He said that he met her in Germany," Cavendish remarked.

"He has never met her, nor been in Germany. What is Germany to him, or to any of us refugees?"

"But he spoke of it with such affection."

"A man needs a country."

"He could have had this one," Cavendish said, "if he had chosen."

"That will be so. You will see."

Cavendish shrugged his shoulders. He was not certain whether Gluckstein had committed a crime against the law or merely one that would ensure his automatic dismissal and drive him into shameful oblivion for the rest of his life. . . .

And then Gluckstein reappeared. He walked into Fort Maxwell, a twin to Fort Hanna ten miles farther north, next morning, unshaven and bedraggled, and leading by a rope a bearded savage with his hands tied behind him and a wounded leg roughly bandaged.

Both needed food, but Gluckstein would not wait. Two hours later Bill Cavendish looked up from his papers to see a dazed, uncouth African in a tattered bush uniform, with a matted beard, pushed into his room from behind.

The terrorist glared at him like a desperate beast and then dropped his eyes and took refuge in the lethargy of the defeated.

Gluckstein, scarcely less dilapidated, peering because his spectacles had gone, stepped forward from the rear of his prize.

"General Chui," he said. . . .

There was not much strength left in him either, and he ate and slept before he told his story.

It was quite brief. Before the trouble started he had left the fort, by his private route, to meet George Kimotho, who had found his half-brother's hideout and led Gluckstein there.

They were just too late. General Chui and his gang had gone down to Fort Hanna.

Here Joseph, in alliance with two of the guards, let them into the stronghold believing his master to be safely in his room; for his master's head was part of the bargain.

Gluckstein, at first ignorant of all this, awaited the gang's return to the hideout.

They came back jubilantly with the stolen rifles, collected their few stores and then made tracks for the forest as hard as they could go.

Gluckstein, single-handed, went after them. For two days he followed on their heels, shivering at night without shelter, expecting a thousand times to be discovered or else to lose them in the thick undergrowth. There were eight of them, and to have a chance of success he had to wait until they separated.

At last there came a time when Chui and two of his followers remained beside a stream to build a shelter, and the rest dispersed to hunt for food, or to seek contact with other scattered gangs.

Gluckstein had never parted with his Patchett-gun. For an hour he kept the three men covered from ambush, until the moment was ripe. He wanted Chui alive.

Then came a moment when a single burst from his automatic rifle was able to dispatch the two lesser fry.

CHUI had made the fatal error few gangsters make twice. He had leaned his rifle against a tree. He turned to run, but Gluckstein shot him in the leg.

Afterwards Gluckstein tied up the General, smashed the rifles, one by one against some boulders, and threw the remnants, with all the ammunition, into the stream.

"To return was easier," he said. "I followed the river."

"And no one followed you?" Cavendish asked.

"They had no arms. Whereas I had."

There was nothing much that Cavendish could say, except that he would report Gluckstein's exploit to the highest quarters, where it would no doubt be recognized.

"There is one favour that I have to ask, Mr. Cavendish, about my poor Taffy."

"Yes, that was sad," Cavendish agreed.

"I would like him to have a decent burial. Perhaps in the fort, under the lookout tower? He was a good watchdog."

"I'll arrange it, old man."

"Thank you," Gluckstein said. "I shall have a stone tablet engraved. Something neat and unobtrusive, you know."

He spent a week's leave in Nairobi, dodging invitations and press interviews, and came back, with a splendid Alsatian, to be posted, on promotion, to Tetu.

Morna Cavendish said: "I hear he's got another photograph . . . even bigger. A brunette this time."

"Well, never mind," said her husband.

"It's quite sweet, really. I've asked him to dinner. He'll be a change . . . something a bit different."

She paused, and then she added: "Oh, and the deputy Chief Secretary will be coming."

Cavendish smiled. THE END

OPEN TO VIEW

by JAMES LEES-MILNE

Drawn by ROWLAND HILDER

"Wry-necked Dick's" servants at Hatchlands were fined 6d. for letting dogs eat off plates

"WRY-NECKED Dick" Boscawen, alias "Old Dreadnought," was perhaps the most popular admiral before Nelson. He earned the first nick-name from carrying his head cocked on one side. The second was given him because of his extraordinary courage and his love of battle.

When he was a young man in command of H.M.S. Dreadnought, the officer of the watch woke him one night and said: "Sir, there are two large ships which look like Frenchmen bearing down on us. What are we to do?"

"Do?" answered the captain, rushing on deck in his night-shirt. "Fight 'em, of course." At the time England and France were not at war.

Admiral the Honourable Edward Boscawen was loved by his sailors and adored by his wife, Fanny, who was herself one of the most adorable of women. The words she had inscribed on his monument relate that he died of a fever in 1761 "at Hatchlands Park in Surrey—a seat he had just finished at the expense of the enemies of his country."

Fanny Boscawen was a most delightful letter-writer. The theme that runs through her correspondence is her abiding devotion to her family and home. She rejoices over her husband's victories, fears for his safety in danger, is wretched when he is sent overseas and longs for his return. Yet her letters are invariably gay, gossipy and amusing.

The Boscawens bought Hatchlands in 1750, and a few years later rebuilt the house, now owned by the National Trust.

They employed young Robert Adam to decorate the interior. It was the first commission this great architect is known to have received. His beautiful ceilings and fireplaces remain exactly as he left them. In the admiral's honour he produced mermen, dolphins, figures of Neptune and Victory, seahorses, flags and trophies of war in plasterwork. Upstairs he contrived an exceptionally elegant porthole to light a corridor.

Admiral Boscawen exercised strong discipline in his household. In the servants' hall a notice still hangs, headed "Rules and Orders to be observed in this Hall without Exception," and the penalty for disregarding them was a fine.

For wiping knives on the tablecloth the fine was 3d., for letting dogs eat off the dinner plates, 6d., and for swearing or using "any indecent language at any time when the cloth is on the table," 4d.

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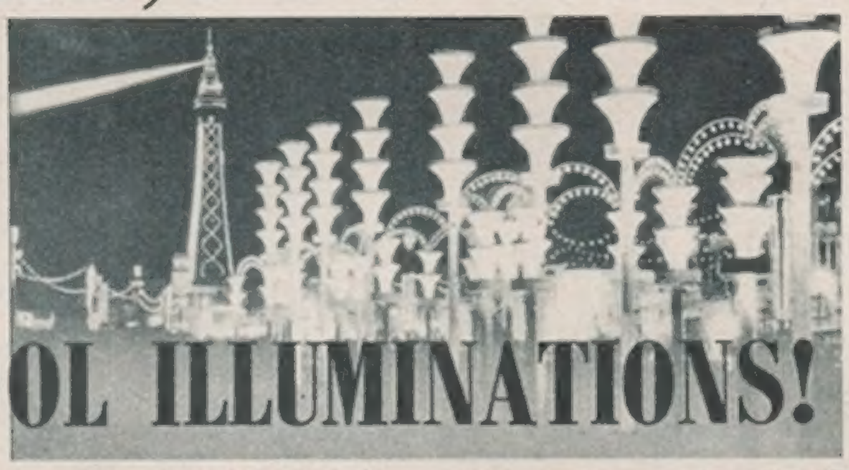

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(Tournament winner will be announced in JOHN BULL dated August 25.)

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit; the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent adjudicators.
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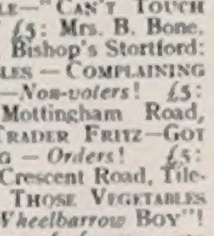

on back. Coupons must not be mutilated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that result of this Contest (in JOHN BULL dated September 15), also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

(See "Daily Herald" on Saturday, September 1, for early news of No. 2,052 result.)

POST ENTRY
"Bullets" 2,052, "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.).

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